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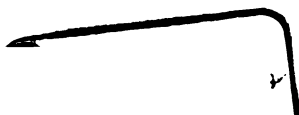




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A
TREATISE
ON
H A P P I N E S S ;

CONSISTING OF
OBSERVATIONS ON HEALTH, PROPERTY, THE MIND,
AND THE PASSIONS ;
WITH
THE VIRTUES AND VICES, THE DEFECTS AND
EXCELLENCES OF HUMAN LIFE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1833.

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CHAPTER VII.

ON COMPASSION AND CRUELTY.

MERCY in the Deity is that principle of beneficence, that flame of love, which has continued to burn ever since the first intelligent being was created. It shines forth in the heavens, and it glows on the earth. It decks the valley with its beauties; it colours every flower; it dresses the sky with splendid robes; it stretches the rainbow from one horizon to the other; it illumines the rural cot and the rivulet; it brings forth the feathered songsters from the groves — hymning continually their praises to the Governor of all things. And when its cheerful rays are hid by some black cloud, or when the darkness of midnight gathers around, still it gleams forth in some pharos on the lovely ocean, by which the mariner may direct his course, over the troubled waters of life, to the haven of repose.

Mercy, or compassion in man, is only as a reflected sunbeam. The wretch who lies in some dark hovel may be, in some small degree, illuminated by the rays of the sun, which, striking on the passenger, are reflected to him. And thus it is the Divinity which first imparts compassion; and it is only a ray from the great fountain which one man reflects on another.

Compassion, among human beings, is a feeling of kindness and tenderness, which not only prevents a person from inflicting pain, but occasions sorrow when pain has been produced. It arises in actions, in words, and in thoughts; it operates with feelings, character, and property. It acts upon the great principle of doing unto others as we would be done by; and it makes us sorry, when we perceive others enduring what we would not willingly suffer. It is occasioned, in the first place, by reasoning, by forming comparisons and drawing inferences; but it arises afterwards as a principle or habit. When it operates in the way of prevention, it may be termed mercy; and when it arises in the way of relief, it may be called pity. Thus, a merciful man will give his horse or his ox no more labour than it can easily perform. A compassionate man will be affected with the condition of one that is laden too heavily, and he will endeavour to lessen its burden.

Compassion arises in actions, by affording assistance in bodily danger; in words, by soothing the agitated mind; in thoughts, by purposing good — by avoiding every harsh or illiberal construction of conduct or language. Mercy, kindness, bene-

volence, charity, and pity — which are expressive of good-will towards men — are amiable and praiseworthy in the possessor, and beneficial to society. Compassion is voluntary. A man may indulge it or avoid it. If the passenger may receive the sun's rays, and reflect some part of them to the poor wretch who lies in darkness, he may either pass on the other side, and thus avoid them, or he may impart this trifling influence. Or, as the diamond shines brightly after it has been exposed to the action of the sun, so may he be influenced; and thus he may cheer and illumine the dark abodes which he visits. It blesses him who gives, and him who takes. Portia, in the "Merchant of Venice," has beautifully described it: —

" The quality of mercy is not strain'd ;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown :
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above his sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice."

Compassion may arise, not only from peasants and princes to their fellow-creatures, but also to the inferior animals. Cowper says, —

" I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,

Yet wanting sensibility,) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail,
That crawls at evening in the public path ;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live."

But mankind, or many among them, have acted very shamefully towards worms, insects, birds, quadrupeds, and all on whom they could exercise their power. It is not surprising that compassion should occasion a calm and pleasing feeling in the mind of the possessor, although sometimes associated with pain ; but the good effects resulting from it will produce a sunshine in the mind, so much the more enlivening, as the opening brilliancy of a summer's day will be increased by the mists and the dewdrops of the morning. But in what manner the base and inhuman practice of cruelty can increase the enjoyment of a rational being is rather mysterious. There is a certain kind of satisfaction produced ; but it is the mere dross of earthly happiness. It is not "bliss such as angels feel," but such as may well arise in the breasts of demons. Vice throws out many a bait for its deluded votaries ; and thus they are hurried on blindly to iniquity and ruin. But as it is with dead bodies, which become not only corrupt and offensive in themselves, but noxious to living persons, so the cruel man is frequently loathsome to himself and hateful to others.

From a low and unmanly inclination to cruelty arise a great number of brutal sports — from the killing of a fly to the torturing of a bull. Whether

it be allowable for human beings to destroy any sort of animal, is a question which may be answered by another:—Is it necessary for food, or is it injurious to comfort, cleanliness, or life? If so, it may be destroyed; but it should be done quickly, and rather as a matter of necessity than of pleasure.

The worst men that ever disgraced the earth were persons who cherished the feeling of cruelty. Rapin says of Jeffreys and Kirk, — “They were two tigers chafed with blood, who had no pleasure but in carnage.” The best men, of whom the annals of history have made any record, have condemned cruelty as disgraceful.

The vice of cruelty has been shown in tormenting birds, dogs, badgers, bears, bulls, and other animals, for the sake of pastime. It has been urged, as an argument in favour of brutal sports, that they generate a daring spirit. It is true that they destroy all feelings of pity and sympathy, which are a powerful check sometimes to a daring infliction of wounds and tortures on our fellow-creatures, but they contribute nothing to personal courage. In order to accustom the Lacedæmonian youths to scenes of blood, and thus to deaden those feelings of humanity which might check them in battle, they were encouraged to massacre the slaves; and on one occasion three thousand were destroyed! Ferocity is no advantage to society. It makes men no better nor happier. It makes them neither better citizens nor better soldiers. Lord Erskine maintained, with much force of reasoning, in the House of Lords,

that brutal sports tended to decrease, rather than cherish, a feeling of courage.

Cock-fighting, dog-fighting, bull-baiting, and several other amusements, are the delight of the scum of society. Let a man be seen on his way to such an exhibition, and, in the opinion of reasonable persons, his character would be exceedingly low. Such a man, it would be thought, is destitute of piety: he is without virtue, without tender feelings, without honour. He is unintellectual; he is brutish: he is unkind at home; he is irregular abroad. He does not enjoy that greatest blessing—tranquillity, a good conscience. With such effects, and with such opinions, can we fancy that he is preparing himself for higher feelings of magnanimity, for nobler attainments of fortitude?

But there are other sports, rather more genteel, but not less cruel. Among these are shooting, hunting, and angling; all of which, when practised as a matter of necessity for a maintenance, or for the purpose of destroying noxious animals, are allowable; but when employed for the purpose of obtaining pleasure, by worrying and wounding inoffensive animals, they are cruel and unjust, and such as few men of a thoughtful and generous spirit would allow. (Some observations on this subject have been given in the chapter on Exercise.)

There may be some degree of cruelty, also, in pugilistic encounters and duelling; but in these cases the combatants are comparatively free. When the mind becomes habituated to cruelty, it

riots in the sufferings of others ; and whether the pain arises from the miseries of beasts, or the woes of human beings, it is of little consequence ; for, provided it does exist, it occasions a feeling of pleasure. And as the man of merit and virtue will endeavour to excel daily in his pursuits, so the barbarous man will strive to go further, day after day, in the novelty and excess of his shameful pastime.

Montesquieu quotes an account of an interview, at Meaco, in the East Indies, between the Emperor and the Deyro, in which the inclination for cruelty was exhibited in a most wanton manner. The number of persons that were murdered was incredible. Hundreds of boys and girls were sewn up in bags ; horses were killed for the purpose of bringing their riders to the ground ; and coaches were overturned, in order that the ladies who were in them might be plundered and murdered. Montaigne says, — “ I could scarce believe it, till I had seen it, that there could be such savage monsters, who would commit murder purely for the delight they took in it ; and, from that motive only, could hack and lop off the limbs of their fellow-creatures, and rack their brains to find out unusual torments and new deaths, without enmity, without gain, and for this end only—to feast their eyes and ears with the distressful gestures and motions, and the lamentable cries and groans, of a man in the agonies of death ! ” The ferocious Severus, when he was residing in Alexandria, caused great numbers of condemned persons to be brought from Rome, that he might witness their execution,

and feast his brutal eyes on their expiring struggles ? Marc Antony sometimes caused the heads of those he had proscribed to be brought to him when he was at table, that he might indulge himself with the bloody spectacle. But the wife of this monster was still worse ; for when the head of Cicero was brought, she took it in her hands, and spat upon it ; and, putting it in her lap, she drew out the tongue and pierced it with a dagger, uttering a thousand curses on the lifeless orator !

Among the early Christians, some were torn to pieces by ferocious beasts ; others were enclosed in the skins of wild animals, and given to furious dogs ; some were buried alive ; others were cut with whips ; others were covered with combustible materials and burnt as torches. Sometimes these persecuted people were banished, and then they were laden with chains and kept in abject slavery. On these occasions the head was partly shaved, one of the legs was disabled, the forehead was burnt with a red-hot iron, and one of the eyes was bored out. Some were pierced with sharp instruments, or scourged, or tortured with the rack or burning pincers : they were beaten with clubs, pricked in the eyes with sharp reeds, dragged about the streets, and roasted in iron chairs. They were, as St. Paul states in his eloquent account, — “ destitute, afflicted, tormented.” These cruelties were practised on Jews as well as Christians. Josephus says, that, on one occasion, he recognised three of his friends (worthy men) who had been crucified by the Romans. They had been on the cross three days, and were yet alive ! If all the

sighs which have arisen from the destitute (those who have been injured by their fellow-men), and all the expressions of sorrow from the afflicted, and all the shrieks of the tormented, and all the groans of the dying, could ascend in one mighty sound to the Deity, how would it shake heaven's concave! and what a dreadful petition would it be for Divine vengeance!

Enough has been said to show that cruelty has been a prevailing, and a horrid vice. Much more might be stated; for the annals of history, in every age, and in almost every country, exhibit a long and a bloody record of the cruelties of mankind. Bayle has observed, that women are generally more tender-hearted than men; and this is perfectly true: but he adds, that those among the female sex who have been cruel have gone further than men. Lady Macbeth is an illustration of this remark; and the wife of Marc Antony, to whom I have just referred, is another instance.

Domestic animals are sometimes treated badly. The horse is beaten for starting, when fear, and not vice, is the occasion of it; and for stumbling, when weakness, and not carelessness, is the cause. The dog is often cruelly used. Oxen, sheep, and pigs are frequently over-driven, badly fed, or shamefully beaten. If the brute creation had a voice, it would utter a long and a loud complaint.

Cruelty has sometimes arisen from pride and ostentation. This was the case with the Romans in their triumphs. For the purpose of sounding their own praises, and exhibiting the spoils of their victories, they loaded their noble prisoners with

chains, and led them in cruel and unmanly degradation. Avarice has contributed to this odious vice. Children, men, and women have been sold, and sentenced to perpetual bondage and servitude. In some parts of the globe, and especially on the borders of Abyssinia, the principal traffic consists in selling children. These are frequently disposed of by their own parents! How many thousands of wretches are annually dragged away from the shores of Africa, and exposed to suffering, and even death, for a little paltry gold!

Even love is sometimes cruel. It is inconsistent and injurious. It may arise in the conduct of parents to their offspring. Through a foolish fondness, they indulge perverse and improper inclinations; and thus the children are ruined. They train them up in luxury and delicacy; and hence the least degree of heat or cold affects them. They allow them not to expose themselves to the fresh air; and thus they are always sickly. They instil into their minds high and foolish notions; and consequently they are more subject to mortification and disappointment. They flatter them, and make them formal and contemptible. Husbands and wives, also, may expend so much love on each other, as to diminish rather than contribute to rational enjoyment. Perhaps the husband may be influenced by foolish whims; and then his wife must never leave his presence:—he cannot live without her: she is his sun—she alone cheers and illumines him; or rather his moon—with many other lunatic notions, disadvantageous to himself and cruel to her. Or the wife, in a similar man-

ner, may be a wanderer from common sense. Madame Neckar was so fond of her husband's company, and he, of course, so fond of her, that she made him promise that he would keep her, after her death, in a glass case; and he did so for many years. This was cruelty.

Ambition and power have been productive of cruelty. How frequently have assassinations been perpetrated for the purpose of giving usurpers and tyrants an undisputed claim to the throne! Children, the softer sex, and the aged, have been treacherously murdered! Not many sceptres have been free from human blood. Cruelty has sometimes seated itself on the bench of justice; and trivial transgressions have been visited with weighty punishments. The rack, and various other tortures, have been used most unmercifully by tyrannical governors. The Holy Inquisition — as it has been profanely called — has practised a great deal of iniquity in this way. The day of Saint Bartholomew will be remembered as a period famous for its dreadful deeds. In many instances superiors have treated inferiors with much brutality. Whatever goes beyond the just requirements of duty, with regard to labour, or restrictions in food and clothing, is unjust and cruel. Authority is sometimes exerted harshly and indiscreetly. Captain Cook observes that, in the Friendly Islands, "the chiefs behave most brutally to the inferior people, and beat them unmercifully. They show them, and their lives, no more regard than if they were dogs."

War has been employed as a mighty engine of

cruelty. A war of ambition and conquest is murder and plunder legalised. Bloody deeds become familiar, and excite disgraceful wretches to perpetrate the greatest enormities. Acts of a repulsive kind performed by warriors have stained the page of history in every age. Polybius states, that Paulus Æmilius, after a victory, destroyed threescore and ten cities of Epirus, and carried into captivity one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The conquests and ravages of Alexander and Cæsar were repugnant, in most cases, to humanity. After the Moguls had invaded and taken the northern parts of China, it was proposed, at one of their assemblies, that all the inhabitants of that populous district should be massacred, for the purpose of turning the country into pasturage. Fortunately, the humanity of one person prevented this barbarity.—Baron des Adrets, having taken the city of Grenoble, was exceedingly cruel to many of the captives. He erected a large platform on the summit of a tower, and caused a great number of the vanquished to precipitate themselves from this dizzy height. If any were too timid they were thrown over. One of the soldiers ran twice to the edge of the platform, but he had not resolution enough to leap off. The cruel Des Adrets said to him, sharply, it was enough to have twice sounded the ford. The soldier replied, with a happy pleasantry, that he would give the general four times to do it. This answer relaxed the stern governor, and induced him to save the poor fellow's life.

Sometimes the malevolence of the heart appears

to have been satisfied, and then a feeling of compassion arises. This is praiseworthy, in comparison with habitual or insatiable cruelty. When Antigonus was presented with the head of his enemy, Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, he wept. And when the head of Pompey was shown to Cæsar, he turned aside with disgust and sorrow.

The appetite of man, superstition, and other influences, have occasioned cruelty. Is it not shameful that a man should occasion the sufferings of others for the purpose of increasing his pleasures? Yet thus, by such barbarous persons, lobsters are boiled alive, cod are crimped, turkeys are crammed, geese are nailed to a board by the webs of the feet, in order to increase the size of their livers! In some countries the inhabitants have fed upon human beings. Captain Cook says, that Maquinna, a chief in Nootka Sound, killed a slave every month for the purpose of drinking his blood! Bruce has related, and his account has been confirmed by subsequent travellers, that in Abyssinia the inhabitants cut off slices from the body of a living animal, and eat it while it is quivering with life! But, even in this country, eels are brutally skinned while living, to the everlasting disgrace of those inhuman housekeepers who patronise the practice. Superstition has tortured brutes and human beings for the purpose of sacrifice. Macrianus, a prefect of Egypt, was fondly attached to the superstitions of that country; and, in celebrating the orgies of that obscene and cruel religion, he put to death a vast number of infants! When Gelon, king of Syracuse, made

a treaty of peace with the Carthaginians, he very humanely insisted on the abolition of infanticide; and Mahomed accomplished a similar reformation among the Arabians and Persians: thus exhibiting the truth of the aphorism, that every evil is attended with some advantage. In China, in India, and in Africa, thousands of children have been sacrificed to the gods. In many of the South Sea islands, among the Eareeoie society (at the time of Cook's visit), the women destroyed all their infants, by putting a bit of cloth, dipped in water, over the mouth and nostrils — a great resemblance to the modern system of burking. A cruel superstition has induced children to murder their aged parents, or to leave them to the rapacity of wild beasts. In India, it has made tender females burn themselves to a cinder, in conformity with a foolish custom. All public occurrences, and especially the funerals of great men, have been attended by acts of cruelty. When the Scythians interred a king, they massacred a great number of his household. Sometimes they encircled the sepulchre with forty or fifty pages on horseback, whom they brutally impaled, riders and horses, and left in that condition until they were dead, and their bodies putrid.

A disposition for brutality, as it has been already observed, will generally increase. Nero began his diabolical career by catching flies and torturing them. This monster caused several houses to be lighted up in the city of Rome for his amusement; and when the flames began to spread, and when the safety of the whole city was endangered, he

leaped for joy! After a short period, the finer sensibilities of the mind are destroyed, and the heart becomes callous. When Charles XII. was killed, Megret, one of his officers, exclaimed, as he looked upon the dead body, — “Voilà la pièce finie; allons souper!” — The farce is now over; let us go to supper! When Don Carlos, the son of Philip II., had been sentenced to death by his brutal father, the executioner entered with a cord for the purpose of strangling him. Don Carlos began to exclaim bitterly against his unnatural parent; when the man coolly replied to him, — “Do not put yourself in a passion, my young master; it is all for your good!”

Cruelty and excellence were never yet united. No thoughtful person could indulge this barbarous feeling. “No two things,” observes Landor, “have less affinity than violence and reflection.” — “If a man be compassionate,” says Lord Bacon, “towards the afflictions of others, it shows that his heart is like the noble tree which is wounded itself when it gives the balm.”

A person should avoid the two extremes of sensibility and brutal indifference. The former is cruelty to the possessor, the latter is cruelty to others. The middle principle, which allows the operation of mercy with judgment, and compassion without excessive feeling, increases, rather than diminishes, the satisfaction of the possessor, while it benefits society.

CHAP. VIII.

ON FORGIVENESS AND REVENGE.

FORGIVENESS is a duty which has been enjoined only by the Christian religion. Retaliation was the spirit of the heathen and the Jewish laws. There have been eminent instances of forgiveness among sensible men of all ages, but these have been exceptions to the general rule: these persons were influenced by better principles than the religious institutions of their country demanded. Milton has beautifully represented a forgiving spirit in Adam. After Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, and thus, in an evil hour, had brought

“ Death into the world, and all our woe,”

Adam does not severely condemn her, but he merely chides her with forgiving language, —

“ Would thou had hearken'd to my words, and stay'd
With me, as I besought thee! ”

The case of Joseph is beautifully illustrative of a forgiving spirit; and, as it might have been expected, he who came as an example for men, that they might walk in his steps, has exhibited the sublimest illustration of patience under indignity, and forgiveness of injury, which this world has ever beheld.

Forgiveness is a magnanimous contempt of

wrongs. The soul rises above the evils to which it is exposed. As the eagle wings its way among the breakers, and is sprinkled by the foam, but rises above it unconcerned, and directs his course to the bright heavens, glittering with the drops of the boisterous waters, so the mind, in which forgiveness is seated as a principle, is calm and tranquil amidst the storms and the insults of life : it mounts upwards to the fountain of all beneficence, and finds at last its home in heaven.

A forgiving disposition is generally produced by the influence of reason or piety. A man practises it because he perceives it to be most contributive to happiness, most noble, or most pleasing to God. It sometimes arises from a feeling of pity towards the offender ; a belief that the wrong was unintentional ; that it was the result of ignorance ; or, if it be fancied that it was the result of malice, it is wisely considered that the malicious person is his own foe, that he brings upon himself the condemnation of Heaven, which is a sufficient punishment. The feeling of revenge is, therefore, changed into one of interest for the welfare of the offender. It may be produced by a reference to self — to the advantages which are enjoyed. A person may conceive that the injury is trifling ; and, as Providence has favoured him with many blessings, the deprivation of this may be unimportant. If it relate to honour, he is aware that he receives as much regard from his fellow-creatures as his own advantage would demand ; if to wealth, he has enough for the enjoyment of life ; if to reputation, he is convinced that his good name has maintained

a clear and steady lustre for a long period, so that a little mist of scandal will not eclipse it. Therefore, in almost all cases, a forgiving disposition arises from a consciousness of merit, an indifference to trifles, and a greatness of soul.

“ To err is human ; to forgive, divine.”

The actions of men, or the medium through which people in general view them, resembles an optical instrument, which, if held in one direction, will magnify, in the other will diminish. Now, the ill-tempered man magnifies and excites himself to retaliation ; the worthy person diminishes, and thus composes his own mind, and leaves others to their reflection. Some men have telescopic eyes, they discover all the defects that lie at a distance, but they never look at home. Every person else is faulty. They never view themselves as evil. They never err in thoughts, in words, or actions — according to their own opinion ; and yet, perhaps, they are continually culpable in all. Shall we deem it likely that the man who is the most easily incensed, and the most desirous of revenging insults, real or imaginary, will be also the most pure and free from blame in regard to his own conduct to others ? By no means ; the opposite is almost universally the case. He that is most susceptible, most alive to the faults of one man against another, or the misconduct of any with respect to himself, is the most liable, and the most frequently guilty of the very same offences.

There may be such a thing as counterfeit forgiveness. A man may stifle his feelings through

fear. But this is no argument against the genuine principle. Otherwise fortitude, mercy, honesty, virtues of all kinds, and piety of all degrees, must be useless, because some men are base enough to imitate them.

The feeling of revenge is odious and disgraceful, in the same degree as that of forgiveness is amiable and exalted. All savage and uncultivated nations have been marked by this repulsive peculiarity. All the basest men in every age, and Satan himself, the great model of all iniquity, have been lovers of revenge. Those, therefore, who cherish this disposition in the present day may claim for their ancestry fiends, the most barbarous nations of antiquity and of modern times, tyrannical governors, cruel taskmasters, and even the most despicable and ferocious brute beasts. How many, and how disgraceful were some of the practices of the French revolutionists! Revenge, in its most diabolical form, was then indulged; and so it was in the commonwealth of Rome, and so it has been in almost all monarchical governments. Collet d'Herbois, during the French revolution, proposed to rase the city of Lyons, and murder the inhabitants. But what was the occasion of this horrid proposal? He had been formerly hissed off the stage in that city! Alexander the Great acted from a low and disgraceful feeling of revenge towards Betis, the governor of Gaza, who had defended the place with much valour against the Macedonian army. He caused him to have his feet bored, and to be dragged at the tail of a cart until he was dead. Alexander admired bravery in

his own soldiers, and he prided himself on his valour: how then could that have been worthy of punishment in one man which was so praiseworthy in another? But men do not, in general, love what is abstractedly excellent, so much as what is contributive to their own interest.

Sometimes revenge arises and operates most severely for a trifling injury or neglect. An act of incivility in Cæsar, who sat on some public occasion when the senate waited on him, is supposed to have been the principal cause of his ruin. But Cæsar, it seems, was unwell. And thus a man should not only avoid the appearance of disrespect in his actions and his words, but if he be compelled to act differently, by some unavoidable occurrence, he should satisfactorily explain the reason. Men, too, frequently fancy that, because their motive is good, no one can be offended; but they must take care *to show* that it is good. On the other hand, many persons are too apt to catch at every thing; to paint it in the most inconsistent and odious colours, and then to breathe retaliation and injury, when no harm had been intended, and where none exists, except in their own discomposed imaginations.

Revenge is sweet, it has been said; but it is sweet only to an acquired taste, or to one which has not been properly regulated. A studied or long-continued purpose of revenge is disgraceful. Because Darius would not forget the affront which he had received from the Athenians, he caused an attendant to proclaim in his hearing three times, immediately before dinner, "Remember the

Athenians !” A protracted exercise of a revengeful spirit is fiendish. A friend of Tiberius had offended him ; and the king kept him languishing in prison for a long time, so that life was become a burden. Some one advised Tiberius to liberate him, or to put him to death ; but the monarch, in a refined feeling of revenge, replied, — “ I have not yet forgiven him.” The celebrated John Wesley heard General Oglethorpe declare one day that he never forgave. “ Never forgive !” exclaimed the worthy divine. “ Do you ever repeat the Lord’s prayer ?”

Retaliation is in some cases proper. It is, for instance, with regard to public justice. But it should never degenerate into revenge. It should be used to prevent, or to warn ; but never to occasion pain, merely for the sake of tormenting the criminal. Suffering is necessary in order to serve as a warning — and only for that purpose. In barbarous times, punishment was a species of revenge. In this country, malefactors, and especially traitors, were tortured shamefully. It has been the same in other European countries. In the East, the utmost refinement of suffering was sometimes employed.

In private life retaliation may be occasionally allowed ; as, for instance, in the regulation of a family, of domestics, or of labourers : but it should always have reference to an improvement of conduct, rather than a pleasure in beholding the mortification or suffering of those who have acted disobediently or injuriously.

Tyrants, in some cases, may be hurled from their

thrones by the great body of oppressed subjects ; but this is rather an operation of justice than revenge : for it is no more unjust for a whole nation to rise up against a cruel monster, who bears the sceptre only to stain it with human blood, than it is for a monarch to suppress a disorderly and uncalled for disturbance among his subjects. In the barbarous ages, when justice could not be obtained, and the oppressed person lay groaning beneath the cruel weight of the oppressor, it was almost allowable to take the sword of justice, and to bury it in the bosom of the tyrant. When Alboin, king of the Lombards, had defeated and killed his enemy, Cunimund, king of the Gepidæ, he compelled Rosamunda, the beautiful wife of the latter, to marry him. On a day of festivity, the anniversary of his victory, he filled the skull of Cunimund with wine, and sent it to the unfortunate Rosamunda to drink ; but she was so much horrified and exasperated at this inhuman request, that she persuaded several of her friends to assassinate Alboin ; and thus the monster received his desert.

Revenge is sometimes indulged in trifling and ludicrous matters. The Mahomedans, for instance, always kill a particular kind of lizard, which they call Hardeen, because they fancy the posture of its head is an imitation of the form in which they place themselves when they say their prayers ! A man stumbles over a step or a chair, or strikes his corn against a stone, or runs against a post, or walks in the dark against a buttress, or falls over a step, and, almost invariably, he anathematises

the cause of his misfortune; and if he have a walking-stick, he gives it a blow or two. And thus Cyrus, from a similar feeling, vented his anger on the river Cydnus, and Xerxes on the ocean.

Some men are suspicious and revengeful; but they are uncertain in their conduct and feelings. Their anger fomented, and then they froth and fume. It is said of Rousseau by his biographer, "Sometimes he would part from you with all his former affection; but if an expression had escaped you which might bear an unfavourable construction, he would recollect it, examine it, exaggerate it, perhaps dwell upon it for a month, and conclude by a total breach with you."

Revenge is the occasion of boxing among children, scolding among housewives, combats with hard words or brick-bats, pugilistic encounters in our streets, duelling, and warfare.

The feeling of revenge grows gradually. It begins in infancy. The child will beat its nurse. A sensation of love arises towards what occasions pleasure, and a feeling of aversion towards what produces pain. We show our love for favours received by kind words, by pleasing actions—this is gratitude; but we show our aversion to the cause of our unhappiness by producing unhappiness in return—this is revenge. Sometimes revenge is shown by inflicting an injury of a bodily kind, sometimes by directing our malevolence to the property, and, on other occasions, to the feelings of another. The latter may be occasioned by words, or it may be produced by influencing the

passions, and exciting compassion, pity, or sorrow. And thus, one person, in revenge, will show how much he is affected: he will not speak nor eat; he will, perhaps, be very ill, or he will commit suicide. Most of these, like other kinds of revenge, are low and unmanly. Shenstone has very well described the buddings of a revengeful spirit, exhibited in the way of sulkiness, by a delinquent school-boy: —

“ Behind some door, in melancholy thought,
Mindless of food, he, dreary caitiff, pines;
He for his fellow's joyance careth aught,
But to the wind all merriment resigns,
And deems it shame if he to peace inclines.
And many a sullen look askance is sent,
Which for his dame's annoyance he designs;
And still the more to pleasure him she's bent,
The more doth he, perverse, her 'haviour past resent.”

And when a person is prevented from injuring his neighbour's property, life, or reputation, he will sometimes vent his malice in ill wishes, in curses on the body or the soul, and sometimes he will curse himself. Nothing, surely, is more disgraceful or more silly than profane cursing. It is worse than the disposition to beat a block over which a person has fallen; because, what a worthless fellow might wish or say with regard to another would never be fulfilled, except he had, as may seem somewhat likely, one powerful personage on his side, who is always ready for mischief. But then it must be remembered that there is a Power above superior to that power beneath. If a man vent curses upon himself, there

is a greater probability that they would be fulfilled; but if he has, or fancies that he has, received a disadvantage, why does he wish for more?

Dr. Beattie observes of revenge, that, "though it may, to an indelicate and inconsiderate mind, give a momentary gratification, even as gluttony and excessive drinking may to a depraved appetite, it can never bring happiness along with it." Dreadful is the condition of those tribes among whom this feeling reigns. In some parts of the globe the inhabitants are continually obliged to keep themselves armed. The husbandman works with his weapon at his side; the women, who go to the stream for water, must be guarded. They truly "dwell in the midst of alarms." Captain Cook remarks of the New Zealanders, that they "live under perpetual apprehensions of being destroyed by each other; there being few of their tribes that have not, as they think, sustained wrongs from some other tribes, which they are continually upon the watch to revenge."

A keen disposition of satire is usually employed as a sort of revenge for real or imaginary evils; but it is injurious to the possessor. Let a person, a female particularly, be considered as a satirist, and all the prepossessions in her favour, which had fixed themselves in the other sex, fall immediately as scales from the eyes; and the men behold her as sour in her disposition, though she be sweet to the lip, or though she be fascinating in appearance. The Duchess of Abrantes was rather keen one day in a joke on Napoleon Buonaparte. The

Emperor pinched her nose pretty smartly, and said, "You are witty, but you are also malicious : do not be so ; for a woman loses all her charms when she becomes an object of dread."

As a feeling of forgiveness may be produced or increased by weighing and estimating matters correctly, so an opposite disposition may be produced by estimating incorrectly ; by aggravating the action and magnifying the result. In Richard the Third we have an introduction to the art of generating a revengeful spirit : —

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

"O thou well skill'd in curses, stay a while,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Forbear to sleep the night, and fast the day ;
Compare dead happiness with living wo ;
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is."

The feeling of revenge may be counteracted by the indulgence of charity ; by looking at ourselves, and considering that we also may be faulty. The eminent Baldus was always inclined to excuse the misconduct of others ; for he said, "If we knew the actual character of the best men, we should find much that needed correction." An inclination for revenge may be diminished, also, by raising one's self (in a very allowable dignity) above the trifle which is intended as an affront or disadvantage. Descartes used to observe, "When any one injures me, I endeavour to elevate my mind so high, that the injury cannot reach it." It

is noble to avoid revenge ; but it is disgraceful to offer insults. In taking revenge, Dr. Beattie remarks, "a man is but even with his enemy ; but in passing it over he is superior." — "Contemn injuries," observes St. Chrysostom, "and thou shalt be a conqueror."

The disposition to revenge transforms an imaginary evil into a real one ; it makes an unintentional offence the source of a perpetual quarrel ; it stirs up families, it sets one village against another, one city against another city, one kingdom against a neighbouring kingdom ; it produces civil wars and foreign wars ; it occasions discords among men of commerce, of literature, and religion ; it occasions the human race, like so many ferocious birds or savage beasts, to inflict upon each other pains and penalties, losses and crosses, discontentment and unhappiness ; to occasion sorrow and lamentation, rather than the offices of kindness, the exercise of charity, and the enjoyment of happiness.

CHAP. IX.

ON VERACITY AND FALSEHOOD.

VERACITY includes all that is expressed by the terms truth, integrity, honesty, fidelity, and sincerity; indeed, all that implies a correspondence of things with words, or words with thoughts. Falsehood includes error, deception, dishonesty, simulation, dissimulation, infidelity, and hypocrisy. Every thing is true in itself; for truth signifies reality or being: therefore falsehood must arise from the signs or means which are employed for the representation of things. There may be error or falsehood occasioned by circumstances: if, for example, two rods be placed in such a position, that when the eye sees the one, the other is hid, being in a continuation of the same line from the eye, the spectator supposes there is only one rod instead of two. If a plank be placed in such a way that the edge, and that only, should be seen by a by-stander, it would resemble a narrow piece of wood instead of a wide one. These errors are unavoidable—they arise from the limited action of the senses. In the same way, a traveller on a desert beholds, as he fancies, a beautiful lake; but on approaching he finds it an optical deception. The northern voyager beholds ships in the heavens—this arises from a similar cause. The wanderer on

the Broken Mountain in Hanover is sometimes astonished at the sight of an immense figure, which seems to walk on the earth, but to raise his head among the clouds, and to imitate the actions of the spectator.

If certain arrangements were made, for the purpose of giving a more attractive appearance to natural or artificial scenery, and there was no intention of producing injury to any person, but only a pleasing and amusing deception, it would be a species of falsehood, but not, therefore, objectionable. Of this sort is the disposal of trees and shrubberies, of flowers, of paintings, of statues, and mirrors; by which truth is mingled with error, and the spectator is deceived. And thus the Koran states, that Solomon received the Queen of Seba in an apartment which was covered with glass, the effect of which was extremely surprising and beautiful. There are novel and unreal representations of things wherever we turn our eyes. Many of the arts are employed solely for the purpose of producing deception. Scenic representations of landscapes and seas; of ships and storms; of battles by land and by water; of houses, cities, and palaces; of conferences among savage chiefs or powerful sovereigns; of ancient events or modern occurrences; of the rural cot, flowers, groves, streams, &c.:—all these are intended to produce a momentary influence of deception. And thus the comic and tragic addresses and actions of performers are intended to take the semblance of real occurrences. The sculptor, as well as the painter, endeavours to deceive us; and so do the orator,

the prose writer, and the poet. When the horse neighed at the portrait of one of Alexander's horses, as if he had recognised an old acquaintance, the animal was deceived; and so were the birds which pecked at the grapes which came from the magic pencil of Zeuxis. But in these cases falsehood was allowable and praiseworthy.

Even brutes practise deception. The Creator has given them certain capabilities, and they have employed them for decoying their prey. Thus, the wolf bleats like the lamb; the tiger imitates the bellowing of the bull; the cat mimics the noise of little birds; some animals alter their form in order to deceive; some conceal themselves; and thus, from the largest beast that feeds on animals to the smallest insect, some kind of deception is employed. Whether these inferior creatures are capable of acting sinfully, in the same manner as men, is a curious and a doubtful question. They do not employ these artifices for the destruction of their own species, but for the subduing of other kinds; therefore it may be no harm. If man were to employ his ingenuity for the purpose of deception, in order to injure or destroy his fellow-creatures, he would be culpable; but it does not appear that any method of deceiving and decoying brutes may be deemed improper. For instance, fishes, birds, wild quadrupeds, and almost every kind which is taken for food or service, is decoyed. The Indians and Africans decoy the elephant, the Arabs the horse, the Greenlanders the reindeer; and we decoy the ox to the yoke and the horse to the bridle, if they be obstinate or restive.

Deception, then, is sometimes allowable. But the rule for our guidance, with regard to our engagements with our fellow-creatures, is this:—every thing which is not strictly agreeable with truth, and which is evidently opposed to reason and the spirit of Christianity, must be condemned. All representations, by words or signs, which are erroneous, and which are believed to be, or intended to be, injurious, are morally evil.

There are some cases in which a concealment of truth may be beneficial. Dr. Beattie observes, “To conceal what we know to be true may sometimes be innocent, and sometimes even laudable; as in the case of our being bound by oath or promise to do so.” And even an oath or a promise may be broken under some circumstances; for the keeping of an oath is necessary only when truth may be founded on truth; that is, if the subject or matter on which the promise is founded be true, the promise itself must be truly performed; but it is doubtful whether, if the thing promised be erroneous and injurious, the promise itself should be binding. If a man be induced to make an agreement under a false representation, he will not be bound, perhaps, to found truth upon error, and to fulfil his part correctly, when the occasion of it was incorrect: and thus, if a man be forced to make a promise, tending to the injury of others or himself, and this promise be unjustly demanded, and unjust in its tendency, he may fail in the performance of it. Suppose a person were compelled to swear that he would, although contrary to law and justice, take the life of a fellow-creature, would

he not be justified in breaking his oath? Veracity is beneficial relatively, if it be agreeable with the Christian law, and consistent with the good of society; but not otherwise. Whenever the performance of a promise would violate some great precept of Christianity or civil government, the oath cannot be binding. For example, we are commanded, by human and divine laws, to do no murder; and these commands are superior to any contract made under the influence of bodily fear to commit that crime.

Although a man would be justified in throwing aside the trammels of iniquity, yet it is questionable whether he should, under any circumstances, bind himself to perform an improper action. It may, perhaps, be sinful to swear, although it may be a greater crime to comply with the iniquitous conditions of the oath. The question is, whether a person may consider himself so much under the especial patronage of Heaven, that, if he act sincerely and fearlessly, he will be preserved; or, whether he may be allowed to practise deception, to blind the minds of wicked men, for the purpose of preserving himself? This is not an age of miraculous interference; but it is a period in which the laws of God must be obeyed. Therefore, except in any singular and necessitous case, a man must act with sincerity; but he may, perhaps, adopt an ingenious method, occasionally, of avoiding injustice and cruelty. Socrates would not fly from his enemies when he might have done so; but many a man has effected his escape from the gloomy walls and massive doors of his dungeon,

by exchanging his clothing with a visiter : and in these cases, where the heroic friend would not suffer from the malice of the enemies, the act may be commendable. It is proper for a person, in all cases, to choose the lesser evil ; bearing in mind, that a violation of a just law, or of the command of the Almighty, is one of the greatest crimes. And, with regard to a promise or engagement, he should not swear, positively, that he will perform what he has no intention of doing ; for this may arise from a culpable timidity : but he may, in a cooler moment, and under different circumstances, alter his intentions, revoke an unjust contract, and act agreeably with the requirement of his conscience. Bishop Taylor says, " Let nothing make you break your promise, except it be unlawful or impossible."

Sometimes a promise, which is made on a trivial occasion, may slip from the memory — it may pass, with the chief part of our thoughts and experience, into the regions of forgetfulness ; but this is not faulty, except in regard to the want of system and attention. A man may make a promise the fulfilment of which would be disadvantageous to himself ; but if it would not cause him to injure his neighbours, to break the laws of the Almighty, or of his country, he would be bound to perform it. Every promise freely made, and lawful in its nature, is binding.

It is allowable, on some occasions, not only to make our performances differ from our promises, but to make circumstances appear different from their real character. I have already alluded to

deceptions produced by art. If robbers should break into a house while the proprietor of the premises was in bed, and he fancied that stillness and a pretended sleep would prove his only security, he might remain with his eyes closed, he might, if necessary, snore; and if any one said, "He sleeps," and quietness would be a confirmation of the statement, yet he might remain silent, and continue to deceive. A person may be misled by actions as well as by language. If I ask a man the way to a certain place, and he point in one direction, and I travel that way, but it lead me to some other place, I should be deceived. If the man directed me wrong intentionally, it was a lie. Now the crime in the man is equal, whether I believe him or not; but if I disbelieve him, and find the proper road, the disadvantage to me is less. If, however, the man says "Yes," instead of directing me with his finger, the lie is no greater. And as the intention to deceive, and the success in deceiving, are the principal points, it would matter but little if the person used twenty words instead of one; for whether a lie be spoken by a concise speaker, or by a verbose one, it adds nothing to the malignity of the falsehood.

A falsehood, then, in order to be sinful, must arise from an attempt to mislead; from a malignity of feeling; or if it prove injurious, unexpectedly, it must be condemned as thoughtless and ill-advised. But whether it proceed from actions or words, it is of little consequence, except that we generally attribute more criminality to the latter than the former; and if common consent has established

this rule, we are bound to comply : for the same reason, we pay more attention to an oath than a simple assertion. If, then, mankind depend more on an assertion than an action, and more on an oath than an assertion, those who break what is most depended on practise the greatest deception. There are degrees of falsehood as well as degrees of other vices ; and those who mingle with society must conform to the general usages and opinions of mankind. We must attend to the relative as well as the abstract character of things.

In almost every country, an oath has been deemed a more important act than a mere assertion : it is recognised as such in the Scriptures. And although profane swearing is condemned, yet an appeal to some great truth, or some superior being, seems to be both solemn and legitimate. A man declares, on this occasion, that, in the presence of the Almighty, who will be his judge, he speaks the truth. The Jews used to say, on taking an oath, " Behold, I swear by the God of Israel, by him whose name is powerful and gracious, that I speak what is true." The Persians swear by the Almighty and Mahomet. They swear also by the holy tomb of the Shah Besade at Casbin, and by the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The Abari, a nation of Huns, used to take an oath by uplifting the sword. The Sarmatians, and many other people of Europe and the East, adopted a similar method. But whatever was the custom, a degree of solemnity was connected with it ; and it was a test for a man of little merit, who would not hesitate to make a

lie by an action or by words, but who would tremble at a public and solemn oath.

Dr. Beattie thinks, that we may not only deceive in actions, when a powerful reason demands it, but also in words. And therefore he says, that "to compose a sick person's mind, or to pacify a madman, one may without blame say what one does not think." By the same rule, if brutal persons have a design to commit murder, and they are in pursuit of a man, and an enquiry be made of a passenger which way the fugitive had gone, he may perhaps direct them a different way, because the object is good, — the life of a man may be preserved, and the sin of murder be prevented. When the celebrated John Knox was beset by enemies, and the place of his retreat was secret, he used to sign his letters "John Sinclair." This was done with an intention to deceive, but the action was allowable.

We are so much regulated by a consideration of the benefit or the necessity of a deception, and the manner in which a deceit in some unimportant matter is conducted, that if the result be agreeable with human welfare, and not expressly opposed to the laws of God, we allow it; and if a tale (which is false) be told us with a smile, we deem it not so heinous as if it were repeated with a serious countenance.

When the story is so improbable that we perceive the marks of fiction on every page, or in every sentence, — as, for instance, in the *Travels of Gulliver*, or some of the tales in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, — we do not conceive it to

be criminal or false, any more than the portrait of a man who had never lived. Or, if a story be very incredible, but yet it be related by a credulous man, we are not offended, but amused; for in all these cases the design is not to injure, but to interest or please. Of this nature is the following story, which was originally communicated as a fact by the credulous Dr. Balthazar, regis of Canterbury, and related by Miss Hawkins in her interesting Memoirs, &c.:—"My brother Morris has a fish-pond, and all of a sudden the fish were gone: they dragged the pond, and afterwards drained it, but not one fish was to be found. At last my brother ordered his men to dig into the mud; and when they had dug a great depth they perceived a smoke. Digging farther, the smoke increased till they came to a chimney, and the roof of a house: they untiled it, and in the room below found a little old man and woman broiling the very last fish; and if my brother had not discovered them, and taken them to his own house, they must have been starved!"

The word lie is always connected with a bad meaning; it implies a base and malicious attempt to deceive: but every thing incorrect is false, or a falsehood; hence a lie and a falsehood are different: a lie must be criminal, while a falsehood may be allowable. Falsehoods have been introduced, not only in the cases to which I have referred, but in all trials of skill or prowess. A fencer will pretend to thrust in one direction, in order that he may have a greater advantage in another. A runner or wrestler will practise similar

deceptions. In naval or land engagements practical falsehoods are allowed : an advance will be commenced, and then suddenly discontinued ; a movement will be made in one part, to withdraw the attention of the enemy from another part. On the sea, a flying vessel, in a dark night, will throw out a burning pitch barrel, that the sight of the pursuers may be bewildered ; and then the vessel will tack, and run in an opposite direction. The Lacedæmonians, at the battle of Platea, being unable to break the Persian phalanx, fell back, pretending they had been worsted ; and then rallying, they obtained the victory. Fictitious fortifications, warriors in effigy, and deceptive artillery, have been frequently employed ; but these have been allowed, an understanding having existed that each might deceive if he could. A general, on one occasion, who had the command of a garrison which was sadly straitened for food, ordered all the loaves in the city to be used in pelting the enemy ; and the latter, believing the town to be well supplied with provisions, and knowing it to be almost impregnable, raised the siege. When the Jews, in the city of Jerusalem, were encompassed by the Roman army, and were suffering from a scarcity of water, they caused a great quantity of clothing to be washed, and hung upon the walls of the city, that the assailants might be deceived. These were cases of allowable falsehood ; but there are others which are equally excusable. On one occasion, when the Roman senate had been unable to decide a question of importance, they agreed that the matter should be kept a profound secret.

Burghley used to say, that he placed more confidence in the word of an honest man, than in another man's bond.

The habit of joking with falsehoods ought not to be indulged ; otherwise deception in fun may become lying in earnest. It evinces a sterile mind, and a great deficiency of ingenuity, when a person cannot be amusing, or cannot endeavour to be so, without relating glaring lies. As a direct and malicious untruth is odious, so even the appearance of one produces an unpleasant sensation ; and this is one reason why falsehood should seldom be employed for amusement.

The habit of deceiving by conduct and pretensions is hypocrisy. This is one of the foulest vices ; for it is an insult to God, and an injury to man. Every thing fair, in such a case, is pretended ; but every thing foul is practised. Smooth language is used ; but the person who depends on it is woefully disappointed. This is a disposition most appropriate for fiends. Milton says of Belial, —

— “ He seem'd
For dignity composed, and high exploit ;
But all was false and hollow.”

Hypocrisy may exist, either in appearing better or worse than the reality. The former is more prevalent. The latter exists among mean groppers for a compliment — who pretend a trifling defect, that they may obtain a little flattery. It exists sometimes among fanatics ; who think that the lower they can sink themselves in their own estimation

the higher they shall rise in the favour of Heaven. Now, if they expect to make an exchange, there is no great merit in it. But it is a question, whether the Almighty would have endowed mankind with certain qualities, if he had intended that they should remain unconscious of them? A man must not think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but where is he commanded to think more lowly of himself than the truth? If we compare ourselves with the Almighty, we are less than the dust in the balance; but if we compare ourselves with men, we may modestly place ourselves in our proper sphere, and maintain it without offence.

Indeed we may, on some occasions, assume an exterior which is better than the reality, without consigning ourselves to the class of hypocrites. A person may be gloomy; but in society he may cause the clouds of sorrow to pass away, or apparently so. If he be soured and angry, he may veil his feelings with a smiling countenance, when he enters the presence of those who were not the occasion of the offence. When a man is introduced to the company of patrons and superiors, he may stimulate himself to more than usual mental exertion; he may endeavour to make his language sparkle as it flows, and his ideas, as so many gems, to shine brilliantly. And thus a person in the society of one who is beloved may endeavour to appear attractive. Every thing that gives a highly coloured representation, whether it be intended or not, is deceptive. The lover seldom shows an unamiable disposition when he wishes to win the

heart of the fair one; for a good temper is as pleasing in man as a bright heaven to the admirer of nature. A disposition that is naturally good is more agreeable, and more to be depended on, than an ill temper under the control of the judgment: and yet the latter is more worthy, and more indicative of a high degree of moral feeling. If the heart be right, the conduct will generally be consistent; and, consequently, the former demands our principal attention. It was said of Aristides that he endeavoured to be virtuous, rather than to appear so. And Socrates, having a high opinion of the duties of man towards his fellow-man, in his external conduct, maintained that the readiest way to obtain excellence was to endeavour to get what we would wish others to think we possessed.

Sometimes falsehood arises from great loquacity. "He that talketh (to excess) what he knoweth," observes Lord Bacon, "will also talk what he knoweth not." On some occasions it arises from interest. The lawyer, for instance, is obliged to make the worse appear the better reason. He endeavours, frequently, "to darken counsel by words without knowledge." — "Among all the professions, (said Charles II., when he was a prince,) I could never choose that of a lawyer; for I cannot defend a bad cause, nor oppose a good one." Marc Antony would never suffer any of his pleadings to be published; because he was conscious that on one occasion he had maintained one thing, and at another time the opposite.

A lawyer does not pretend, and it is not understood, that all the assertions which he makes are

exactly agreeable with his private opinion. A pleader is the mouth of the client. He states what the party interested would be supposed to allege, if they understood the nature of the law. When a criminal is placed at the bar, he pleads that he is not guilty. This is only in agreement with the forms of the court. It means, "I am not proved to be guilty; I am willing to be tried by witnesses." In legal proceedings sometimes an hyperbolical style is employed; but a certain meaning is understood, and therefore no actual deception exists. In the professions of friendship, of respect, obedience, and humility, which are made in epistolary communications, it is understood that custom has established them merely as a form. There are some cases in which oaths are administered binding a person to a full compliance with the matters contained in the statement; but it is understood that no man can believe the whole: consequently, a belief in the general principle or spirit of the requirement may be deemed sufficient. No two persons can think exactly alike; and if a full and particular belief be demanded, then no man can conform to a rule which has been made by another. Whenever there is an understanding between the parties that a certain form, expressed in one way, must be understood to signify something else, then there is no lie nor criminality connected with it. A man may also alter his opinion. He may deem this to be better to-day; but he may choose some other thing to-morrow. A person may refuse an offer on one occasion, and afterwards he may accept it. At meals, a man

may decline taking what he is invited to receive. He may say, "I would rather not;" but, afterwards, some occurrence or thought may alter his inclination, and then he may take it. But, as a general rule, a person must avoid indecision and inconstancy; he must follow truth as nearly as possible. He must do this, because it is necessary for his own welfare, for the good of society, and it is demanded by the duty which he owes to God. The minister of religion, who professes by his office the belief and practice of Christianity, is not excusable if he be, in the language of the Scriptures, "a wolf in sheep's clothing." He breaks the law of his Maker; and the law of custom, however powerful it may be, is not a sufficient exculpation.

Sometimes falsehood arises from unjust criticism or censure, and on other occasions from flattery. The Emperor Julian, having been praised for his impartial administration of justice, observed, "I should be gratified, if I did not know, that those persons who commended me did it not so much on my account as their own. It was rather in reference to their own interest than my honour." Cardinal Richelieu remarked of his pretended friends, — "They all make the same earnest court to me; and those who would ruin me give me as many marks of friendship as those who are sincerely attached to my interest." Dr. Johnson observes of the pretended friends of Savage, that many of them boasted of kindness which they had never felt, and favours which they had never bestowed. Ambition will engender falsehood. False

promises, and even hypocritical oaths, are sometimes made the stepping-stone to worldly power. Julius Cæsar was artful and designing when he had any favourite object to promote.

When malicious lies are told, there is frequently a heavy punishment, which arises from the attending circumstances. Boileau very foolishly told a lie to Louis XIV.; and being obliged, as he thought, to maintain what he had said, he was compelled to alter many records of dates, and to make false statements, lest he should be discovered.

Error sometimes arises from ignorance. The Irish scarcely ever give a correct answer with regard to distance. The Cornish and the Welsh resemble them in this respect. With regard to the inhabitants of the sister kingdom, Sir Jonas Barrington remarks, in his amusing Sketches, — “If you meet a peasant on your journey, and ask him how far, for instance, to Ballinrobe? He will probably say it is ‘three short miles.’ You travel on, and are informed by the next peasant you meet, that it is ‘five long miles.’ On you go, and the next will tell ‘your honour,’ it is ‘four miles, or about that same.’ The fourth will swear, ‘If your honour stops at three miles, you’ll never get there!’ But on pointing to a town just before you, and enquiring what place that is, he replies, ‘Oh, plase your honour, that’s Ballinrobe, sure enough!’ — ‘Why, you said it was more than three miles off?’ — ‘Oh, yes, to be sure and sar-tain, that’s from *my own cabin*, plase your honour. We’re no scholards in this country. Arrah !

how can we tell any distance, please your honour, but from *our own little cabins*? Nobody but the schoolmaster knows that, please your honour.' ”

Some people, from a timidity of speaking what is incorrect, seem as if they feared to speak at all. This is scrupulosity. It operates in language as well as in actions. It is a disadvantage to the possessor; and it is unpleasing, or, sometimes, disgusting to the listener. To a plain and simple question, after a long delay, the monosyllable “Well,” or “Perhaps,” is introduced; and then something else trails out, as the wounded snake “drags its slow length along.” A person should speak boldly and smartly, but modestly. It is not supposed by the listener that the speaker must necessarily communicate truth; and the person who answers a question must not fancy that he can always impart the words of wisdom; consequently there will be sometimes correctness, and at other times error: but the speaker should give his opinion with a certain degree of deference, and without that affectation and cant which are generally the symptoms of an intention to deceive, rather than a wish to inform.

The practice of answering one question by asking another arises from a similar cause; namely, a scrupulosity or timidity of speaking without a great deal of thinking. If the distance to a certain place be asked, the reply will be, “Where did you come from?” Or, in answer to a question, it will be enquired, “Dost thou wish to know?” All this is impertinent and foolish.

Simplicity and truth are usually connected. The

former is the unsophisticated representation of things, the latter is the absence of deception. If the language which is employed by a speaker is agreeable with his feelings, it is termed sincere; if consistent with reason, it is termed common sense. Sincerity raises no declamatory professions; it boasts no gaudy abilities; it uses no high-sounding language: but its actions are simple and expressive; its speech is plain and forcible; its effects are pleasing and convincing. Sincerity being produced by actual feeling, and the lips being accustomed to speak out of the fulness of the heart, a man will not often fail in communicating his thoughts and feelings to others. When Lyncestes had been accused of a conspiracy against Alexander, he was brought before the army to make his defence. But he had prepared a speech, which he had committed to memory; and when he was at fault in some part of it, the soldiers fancied he had been relating a feigned story, and they killed him.

CHAP. X.

ON LIBERALITY AND BIGOTRY.

LIBERALITY is a feeling of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures. We speak as favourably of them as possible, and we endeavour to think of them charitably. All this is consistent with correctness of judgment, with independence, and with the exercise of justice. For if, in any case, we conceive a man to be worthy and honest, who is evidently unprincipled, we are not liberal, but credulous. There are three ways in which human merit may be estimated : — by comparing one person with another ; by judging the conduct of men in reference to human laws and customs ; and by estimating the actions of human beings by the requirements of the Almighty. By the last, all men must be condemned. If, then, we are necessarily faulty, and yet are tolerably well pleased with ourselves, let us, for the sake of consistency and justice, cherish a favourable opinion of others. If we discover that some men are worse than we are, let us pity rather than despise them. Let us not encourage hatred or revenge, otherwise we shall show that, although our fellow-creatures have deviated from the path of propriety, we have made ourselves equally faulty by fostering these hateful dispositions. Is it reasonable that the opposition

to evil should be maintained by evil? And yet it is too frequently the case. This, however, would seem to show that the object of the complainant, in many instances, is not so much an interest for the welfare of others as an inclination to hunt after impropriety for the sake of gratifying censoriousness.

In the pursuit of philosophy, truth should be the principal object, — not envy or ambition. In political matters, patriotism should be the guide, — not party spirit and rancorous opposition. In religion, we should be stimulated by the principle of promoting “peace on earth, and good-will towards men.” This is the character which was connected with Christianity by the Divine Founder : he did not introduce bigotry and cruelty. In the pursuit of wealth, we should be neither unfair nor monopolising ; but we should endeavour to procure a comfortable maintenance, and allow others to do the same. If we practise these things we shall be liberal ; if not, we shall merit the character of selfish and bigoted persons.

When a low principle of private interest influences the actions of a man, he is usually displeased with his own possessions, and he generally envies the advantages of others. Dr. Jeremy Taylor observes of this envious disposition : — “It eats the flesh, and dries up the marrow, and makes hollow eyes, lean cheeks, and a pale face.” But a liberal feeling produces contentment, good health, and cheerfulness.

A bigoted man will be obstinately attached to his own system, and he will be prejudiced against

the opinions of others. Bigotry occasions stiffness, obstinacy, uncharitableness, falsehood, malice, and cruelty. With such a train of evils, — having nothing that is lovely or of good report, — is it not natural that every one should condemn it? But a man will sometimes reject it in his theory, while he will support it in his practice. No person countenances bigotry in an opponent; and yet, in his violent exclamations against the belief and conduct of another, he may exhibit the effects of bigotry in himself. It is as if every one hated a grey or a black eye, and yet most men possessed it; but as every person could only behold the defect of another, so he would ridicule what he saw, without considering that he himself possessed a similar blemish.

Ill-will and harshness arise from a discord of opinions; —

“ ’Tis with our judgments as our watches; none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.”

However, we should remember that a variation is unavoidable, and this should occasion a feeling of liberality. If one man differs from another, and thinks himself justifiable in so doing, why should he condemn another for differing from him? The strongest degree of confidence is no proof of our correctness; for many have been exceedingly positive, and greatly mistaken. Locke observes, — “ Crooked things are as stiff and inflexible as straight; and men may be as positive in error as in truth.”

Obstinacy implies a stiff and unreasonable main-

tenance of an opinion. Prejudice is a premature or hasty conclusion on a disputable matter. Both may proceed from a bad heart; but they frequently arise from ignorance. Some men are habitual bigots and persecutors; and if they had not one subject on which they might gratify their spleen, they would find another. Reccaredus, a king of the Wisigoths, in the sixth century, was an opposer of Christianity; but he became a believer in the orthodox faith, and then he cruelly persecuted the Jews. The object and not the disposition was changed. Persons of this kind profess a love of virtue; but their minds are so much perverted, that innocence and excellence are made the principal objects of disapproval. They dislike virtue, because it gives them no food for their depraved appetite of scandal; and they detest merit, because it eclipses their own twinkling lustre. A citizen of Athens, who had voted for the banishment of Aristides, confessed that he had done so because of the high character which that worthy man had obtained in the city. A feeling of rivalry or envy has sometimes grown up from emulation. The latter is meritorious, but the former is injurious. Dr. Beattie observes, that "nothing gives a more favourable opinion of a man's candour and temper, than to live on good terms with those whom he considers as his antagonists in the career of honour." Emulation endeavours to go onward; but envy endeavours to keep his opponent back. The learned Abelard composed an ingenious work on the Trinity, and explained many intricacies which had puzzled others; but this, instead of

procuring for him the esteem of his countrymen, induced many, who had been less skilful, to oppose him most virulently, so that he narrowly escaped with his life. Our Saviour accused the Jews of persecuting him for performing good works.

We are required by every principle of reason and religion to discountenance the influence of ill-will and jealousy. We must not approve a thing because we possess it, nor undervalue it because it is possessed by another. We may exert ourselves for the purpose of acquiring learning, wealth, and honour; but we must always act justly and liberally.

If we look into the history of the world, we shall discover both the prevalence and the unreasonableness of bigotry. This fiendish principle, like an ill-omened bird, has spread its wings and fluttered about in the night. In Europe, during the ignorance of the middle ages, bigotry burst forth in a lurid flame, making the darkness of that period visible. But, on every occasion, as the light of knowledge advances, this imp of darkness is eclipsed. In philosophy, prejudice and bigotry cruelly persecuted the eminent Galileo. When this learned and ingenious man was nearly seventy years of age, and was worthy to have been crowned with laurels for his astronomical discoveries, he was obliged, on his bended knees, in the presence of a junto of cardinals, to deny the truth of his opinions, otherwise he would have been burnt as a heretic. Error, vice, and ambition, make men dread the least glimmer of truth, lest its rays, shining into one window of

their dark and superstitious building, should discover the odiousness and defilement of the whole. Any change, therefore, however important or trivial, is immediately suppressed. In almost every age we find some disgraceful example of the tyranny of ignorance over knowledge. Anaxagoras maintained that the sun was a globe, and his countrymen condemned him to die; but the philosopher avoided the brutal sentence by flight. Virgil, Bishop of Salzburg, was excommunicated and degraded from his priestly office, in the eighth century, for having asserted that there were antipodes on this globe, and that there were other worlds. Roger Bacon was deemed a wizard by those who had not wit enough to be conjurers.

A great part of the virulence and opposition which have arisen in politics has been generated by envy and private interest. Many a man, who was indifferent to royalty or republicanism, has entered warmly into political contests, when an expectation of gain has been the stimulus. There have been changes from one side to the other, as the vane moves with the wind, a profitable market for talent being the only inducement. All is not patriotism that looks sincere. Sometimes a hatred to particular persons or parties serves as a foundation for political professions, in the same way as Julian forsook the Christian religion from a dislike to the family of Constantine. Our great Milton, although he was worthy of high esteem, was, in the opinion of Dr. Johnson (who himself was a bigot), rather faulty in this respect. He observes; — “Milton’s republicanism was, I am afraid,

founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance, impatient of control; and pride, disdainful of superiority." This was the case with many of the hot-headed Puritans; and the same may be said of many among the royalists. A man's bigotry must be usually inferred from his general character, rather than from his particular actions; for one person will appear to act harshly and unreasonably, when he has good motives for his conduct; another will appear to be lenient, when, for the little that he does, he has no cause, either in justice or consistency.

Religion has served as an occasion for the most violent bigotry. One reason is, that its principles and doctrines are important; and it is a prevailing opinion, that a certain creed is essential to salvation. Truth, then, or error, will be the introduction to life or death. If error be propagated, it will occasion (as those zealous contenders for forms and ceremonies suppose) the everlasting death of thousands, who would otherwise have been saved. It is no wonder, therefore, that opposition, jealousy, prejudice, and persecution should arise. The Almighty did not appoint these evils, nor does he approve of them; but they are the result of this contracted view of things; consequently, this view must be incorrect.

When St. Paul was a bigoted Jew, he believed that the doctrines of Christianity were false — and thus he employed his influence to check them. But a little opposition fans the flame of zeal, and makes men obstinate in a bad cause, or praise-

worthily firm in a good one. Constancy excites more strenuous opposition; and thus the Jew of Tarsus breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the Christians; and he cruelly persecuted them from city to city. In cases of this sort there is a trial of strength. Fortitude and principle range themselves on the one side, and endeavour to maintain their ground; while malice and cruelty employ their fiendish arts to succeed on the other side. A persecuting spirit is always a bad one:—a firm resistance to harshness and oppression is almost always meritorious. If the principle of opposition be not so powerful as to crush immediately the object of its hatred, the effort will be useless; for oppression will call forth investigation; and there is so much honour and good feeling among mankind in general, that they will support the cause of the injured party. If any system be painted in odious colours, many persons will hate it: but when a stir arises, people will examine into its merits; and if they find that it has been misrepresented, and that the believers in it act nobly, they will break through all control, and embrace what they had formerly despised. Thus a persecuted people has generally become a thriving people; and when the check is removed, multitudes who had been undecided,—who had been convinced of the truth of the doctrine, but had been timid of a public profession,—come forward simultaneously, and, like the bursting forth of a mighty torrent, they carry every thing before them. Thus it was with the

early Christians: when they enjoyed rest, after violent opposition, they multiplied greatly.

A persecuting spirit, on account of religion, has arisen among Jews, Mahometans, Heathens, Roman Catholics, and Protestants. Aberbarnel, a bigoted Jew, declared that the grace of God did not extend beyond the river Jordan; and that all the countries eastward were not only without the favour of Heaven, but that the inhabitants were unworthy of the regard of Jews, because they were followers of another religion. Barcochebas, a violent rabbi, condemned all persons to a cruel death who would not deny and blaspheme Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the Jews have been persecuted by Heathens, Mahometans, and Christians. There always are, in every age, some bloody-minded men, —

“ Who think through unbelievers’ blood
Lies their directest path to heaven.”

At an assembly of the States in the sixteenth century, John Quintin demanded that all the inhabitants of the country should be compelled to embrace the Roman Catholic religion; — that no heretic should be allowed to marry, or to carry on any mercantile engagements. This diabolical proposition he endeavoured to support by Scripture arguments — so far may ignorance and bigotry lead men astray. The massacre of St. Bartholomew’s day will be an everlasting stain on the popish religion and the French nation. That inhuman monster, Charles IX., stationed himself, early in the morning, at a window, with a harque-

buss, which he fired on the poor wretches who rushed by, endeavouring to escape from their cruel persecutors. Seventy thousand persons were butchered in France, in the course of one week, by the popish party. This barbarous proceeding was approved by the church, and a solemn thanksgiving was offered up at Rome on the occasion, by the command of his holiness the pope! Babelot, chaplain to the Duke of Montpensier, was so violent towards the Protestants, that he left his monastery for the purpose of following the army against them. A fixed or habitual hatred is scarcely human — it is fiendish; and the transition from the law of reason to the law of arms is most unnatural — but yet it is frequently practised. There are too many hot-headed men, who rush pell-mell into every contest, —

— “ Fire-eyed disputants, who deem their swords,
On points of faith, more eloquent than words.”

The men who engage in a religious war are generally the most ignorant of the history, nature, and influence of the questions under dispute.

It is a shame that precepts of an unchristian kind should ever be spoken from a Christian pulpit, — that the system which inculcates peace should be used for exciting discord. But M. Jurieu of Rotterdam published a sermon, in which he earnestly recommended that all heretics should be hated; and that no man should hold intercourse with them, or confer any benefit on them. Erasmus taught that heretics should be put to death; and when it was intimated that he had on one

occasion recommended an opposite practice, he refuted it with indignation. Beza, although he was a good man, was blinded by prejudice; and he countenanced persecution, and so did Malebranche.

Bigotry and a spirit of coercion have not been confined to the popish church, but they have sprung up in the Protestant system. John Knox thus condemned the worship of images:—"Idolatry ought not only to be suppressed, but the idolater ought to die the death." The feelings of this eminent but harsh man were most probably raised in the way of opposition or retaliation. Schultz, a minister of the Lutheran church, maintained that the opinions of the Calvinists, with regard to the eucharist, was the very sink of heresy, and the utmost effort of Satan's rage; and that no one would maintain this who was not the sworn enemy of God, and who did not merit eternal punishment. Musculus, who lived in the sixteenth century, declared that all who taught that Jesus Christ died only in his human nature, belonged to the devil, both body and soul. The creed usually attributed to St. Athanasius is a specimen of absurdity and prejudice. All men are therein bound to believe what no man can understand; and the everlasting happiness of every one is made dependent on subtile distinctions and definitions, which the writer himself could not comprehend. How different to the benevolent arrangements of the Almighty, and the sublime declaration of Scripture!—"A wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err." George III. seems to have possessed no partiality for this creed. Bishop Watson says it

was related to him by Dr. Heberden, that at Windsor chapel, "the clergyman there, on a day when the Athanasian creed was to be read, began with 'Whosoever will be saved,' &c. : the King, who usually responded with a loud voice, was silent. The minister repeated, in a higher tone, his 'whosoever;' the King continued silent; but his Majesty afterwards went through the rest of the service audibly as usual."

Calvin, Luther, and many other eminent and pious men, were persecutors. owing to an excitation of the passions by cruel usage or imaginary grievances. When party spirit runs very high, people condemn each other, not only for defects (and for these too harshly), but for crimes which were never perpetrated, and for motives which never existed. An innocent doctrine is so much distorted, that many persons fancy it is only capable of leading the soul to perdition; and then they inflict (when they have an opportunity) "salutary chastenings," as they are willing to think them:—they persecute the body for the salvation of the soul. But they never choose this kind of "salutary chastenings" for themselves, although they may be as defective as other people. It may be said, perhaps, "These persons are stimulated by zeal; they think they act rightly by interfering with their neighbours." True; but the others fancy themselves correct, and think that those officious persons should attend to themselves. Let both parties, then, become quiet and harmonious;—let them put in practice (instead of uncharitableness and cruelty) those divine principles which

contribute to happiness in this life, and felicity in the next.

“ O shame to men ! devil with devil damn’d
Firm concord holds ; men only disagree
Of creatures rational.” MILTON.

Bigotry carries a man to extremes. He forsakes not only apparent evil, but actual good. He roots up the wheat with the tares. Calvin and others, at the Reformation, would give no man credit for piety and sincerity who would not willingly destroy the whole of the popish system. Many conscientious persons were desirous of having the church reformed, but not demolished. Great changes are dangerous; and they are almost always performed by turbulent, hot-headed, or unprincipled men. In the present day, there are many (and those, perhaps, include the best members of society,) who are desirous of seeing the established religion of this country improved. As an ancient and venerable edifice, which may be restored to its original beauty, they would wish to see the church of England purged from its defects, and made, as much as possible, free from spot and blemish; but they would lament the downfall of what has been an honour, and of what may continue to be a benefit, to this kingdom. A sincere desire to improve, and not to destroy, constitutes the difference between a friend and a foe. Abuses and inconsistencies ought not to be allowed in political or religious establishments. But let no one imagine that the best way of improving a garden, in which there may be some weeds with many fragrant shrubs and beauti-

ful flowers, is to plough it up. Every thing new possesses defects; but in an old system the imperfections have been long observed: these may be removed, and we should then possess what would be comparatively perfect. It has been found, by experiment, that a branch grafted upon an old trunk will make a more productive and valuable tree than if the trunk be thrown away, and a new tree reared in its place. The eminent Melancthon was so much disgusted with the sweeping measures and the persecuting spirit of his contemporaries, that he had a serious intention, at one time, of banishing himself from Christendom, and taking up his abode in Palestine. And Peter Abelard (before this period), for a similar reason, had thoughts of flying away from men of his own profession, into some Mahometan or Pagan country. A vast number of religious houses and churches — some of the most beautiful and venerable monuments of skill and piety — were swept away by the brutal hand of bigotry. The actors in these cases were generally ignorant, and devoid of taste or reason: they were no lovers of architectural beauty, or of that enchanting scenery which is formed by a secluded vale, groves of venerable trees, mossy rocks, and shaded rivulets, with some ivy-covered monastery or church and tower, with carved emblems, and the impress of the finger of Time on every stone, —

“ And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.”

At the Reformation there was a general destruc-

tion of temples, monasteries, nunneries, mosaic work, embroidery, statues, and paintings. Knox, and many of the principal reformers, encouraged these barbarous proceedings. Knox declared, that the best way to prevent the rooks from returning was to destroy their nests. Piety and misguided zeal are frequently connected. The art of regulating religious feeling is to allow sincerity and attachment without intemperance; but when party spirit is very high, the voice of reason is seldom heard.

When persecution takes the garb of piety, she appears more holy, but she is more bitter and fiendish. She claims a liberty of doing more than if she were not so inconsistently clothed. The professors of Christianity have gone further than Mahometans. The Moslem law enjoins persecution; but the believers in the Koran seldom indulge it. "In Persia," says Pietro delle Valle, "by a particular and very ancient privilege, liberty of opinion is allowed to all; each following the religion his conscience dictates, and living as he pleases under the protection of the law." The Christian dispensation, on the other hand, forbids persecution; but the professed disciples of Christ have practised it in almost every age. The Jews have united the command and the practice of persecution. Under the levitical system, the judgments of the Almighty were executed summarily, and one nation was employed in punishing another; but the matter is very different now. No man has a right to raise his hand against his brother in a matter that concerns the Almighty and the human soul. When licentious principles are promulgated

subversive of good order and human happiness, the welfare of the state requires that they should be checked. But it is sometimes questionable what may be deemed licentious; and then there may be a difference of opinion as to the best mode of counteracting it. However, it may be taken as a principle, that fair means, and the influence of reason, will be more effective than foul measures and coercion.

Quarrels of all kinds have arisen among boisterous bigots. There have been battles of books, of pamphlets, octavos, quartos, folios, and manuscripts, in which much ink has been shed, and much paper wasted. Illiberal epithets have been used most liberally. Sir Thomas More possessed the character of calling bad names in excellent Latin. In the controversy between Milton and Salmasius it became a matter of question which could use the worst epithets, rather than which could produce the best arguments. Gruterus employed against his opponent Pareus one hundred and thirty-six abusive names in one book. Men have sometimes endeavoured to excite discord by misrepresentation; and in some cases they have done it through mistake. Fox has given an account of the martyrdom of two or three persons who were living many years afterwards. The last moments of eminent men have been miserably caricatured by the opposite party. Thus, the horrid death of Calvin, Luther, and most of the eminent reformers, have been recorded by the Papists. A good system has been designated by disgraceful terms, merely because it was an opposing system.

Every man deems his own opinions orthodox, and those of others heterodox. An act of intolerance was passed in Scotland, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, for the purpose of prohibiting the introduction of Luther's works, which were termed, in the words of the act, "the seed of all filth and vice." Bigots sometimes condemn an objectionable practice severely, because they may allow themselves in something which is equally bad. Such persons, as Butler says, —

"Compounded for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to."

And sometimes people will object to trifles which are allowable, because they may transgress their own minds with regard to actual vices. How many hypocrites, ill-tempered persons, and mere sinners, being unquiet in themselves, will cry out against a trifling indulgence in dress, and a presumptuous cheerfulness! Clothing may be used for ornament and comfort, but such people object to the former, so that by this rule a wooden peg would be sufficient for a man. Cheerfulness, and not misery, is generally the result of a good conscience; and a person who does not possess it must be disordered in his body or his mind. Some men will live strictly, merely because they may have an opportunity of condemning others, — so sweet is the indulgence of a censorious spirit! But it is worse to gratify an uncharitable feeling than to practise censorious practices.

Religion has been sadly disgraced on many occasions. There have been wars of religion, — the

dominion of peace has been endeavoured to be founded on mangled corpses and ground besmeared with blood! Human beings too frequently, as Milton says, —

——“ Live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy;
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait.”

Religion has been pretended as the cause of the violent persecutions which have existed in various parts of the globe. The cruelties that were practised on the Christians in the time of Aurelian were said to have been demanded by piety and morality. The Papists pretended that their bloody persecutions were countenanced by the laws of God; and that the establishment of the horrid Inquisition was necessary for the pure and benevolent influence of Christianity. The Protestants, however, when they have possessed power, have sometimes used it harshly, but they have never been equally faulty with the Roman Catholics. The genius of Protestantism is free; that of Popery is restrictive and persecuting. It has been triumphantly stated, that the number of Papists put to death by Protestants in the time of Elizabeth was equal to that of the Protestants martyred by Papists in the reign of Mary; and thus it has been inferred that one system is as faulty as the other. People must be exceedingly fond of novel opinions if this be welcomed as true. The reign of Elizabeth was forty-five years, that of Mary five. In the

course, without a capability of assigning a reason for it, except, "I will, because I will;" and then,

—"Once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last."

Cicero exhibited a specimen of prejudice when he declared, he would rather err with Plato than be right with others. Prejudice arises generally from an ignorance of what might be said in the support of another opinion. Thus, persecutors have been the most unacquainted with what they have condemned. Tertullian, in his Apology to the enemies of Christianity, exclaims, "What can be more unjust than for men to hate that with which they are unacquainted, supposing even that the thing itself is deserving of aversion! For only can any thing be reasonably hated when we are acquainted with its demerits." Jonathan Boucher has wisely observed, that the most unreasonable prejudices of men are generally the strongest. Narrow-minded people are bad reasoners. There is a specimen of sapient logic in the "Twelfth Night," which very much resembles the method pursued by these self-satisfied persons, — "That that is, is; so I being master Parson, am master Parson. For what is that, but that? And is, but is?"

There is proof enough that prejudiced men have not been the most virtuous, nor have they been the most consistent in their opposition to others. It is said of the company of fathers that examined the works of Abelard, for the purpose of condemning them, that while some one read those masterly writings, they were all devoutly engaged in elating

themselves spiritually from the bottle, until, having reached their zenith of inspiration, they sunk into drunken stupidity. But previously to the consummation of intoxication, they stamped, jeered, and laughed; and when they heard any thing new, they demanded that the author should not be suffered to live. At last, they answered the reader with only half phrases and half words, and then fell either asleep or under the table!

Good men are very imperfect, consequently there may be found in the black list of persecutors many persons who ought to have known better. Aurelian was a man of learning, and was adorned with a good disposition, and many estimable qualities, but he countenanced persecution. On the other hand, Caracalla was a vile man, and he gave the Christians rest. Moses was led astray by his feelings, when he rashly replied to the Israelites. The eminent Polycarp sinned in a somewhat similar manner. Marcion, the leader of an heretical sect, met him, and said, "Polycarp, own me."—"I do," replied the bishop, "own thee to be the first-born of Satan!" As falsehood may exist in words or actions, so bigotry and persecution may be shown by hints, by bitterness of speech, and by actions; sometimes it may condemn men to punishment, and sometimes to the flames of martyrdom. Sir Thomas More was a bitter opponent of Protestants; and who would have thought that Sherlock was a persecutor? But, however improbable it may seem, he recommended the imprisonment of Baxter.

Uniformity of opinion is impossible. If men

statement. Tradition says, that in Bohemia, in the eighth century, a leg-bone of a giant was found, which measured twenty feet !

Liberality will preserve a person from many erroneous notions, and from many improper actions: it will enable him to give to others that credit which is due; whereas bigotry brings into operation all the worst passions of human nature. There is scarcely any thing more contributive to happiness—to a free, calm, and pleasant condition of the mind—than liberality; and scarcely any thing more productive of misery—of credulity and discord—than bigotry.

CHAP. XI.

ON TRANQUILLITY AND ANGER.

TRANQUILLITY is opposed to anger, in the same way as a calm is opposed to a storm. Tranquillity is rather negative than positive. It is the absence of exciting causes ; and thus the gods of almost all nations have been described as existing in a state of repose. The voluptuous Asiatic experiences tranquillity, and this is his highest enjoyment. Tranquillity, however, in the usual acceptation of the word, implies a state of equality ; an evenness of disposition, which is the opposite to anger and the influence of unhappy passions. This may be adapted for the bustling engagements of life ; there may be an outward energy and an inward calm. Tranquillity implies cheerfulness, good temper, or good humour. Dr. Johnson terms it “ a habit of being pleased, a constant and perpetual softness of manners, easiness of approach, and suavity of disposition.” It resembles the delightful stillness of a summer’s evening, when the ocean is tranquil and glassy—the heavens are adorned with brilliant tints—the clouds repose on the horizon—the hills, the vales, and the groves are peaceful. Or it is motion without confusion ; as when the stream glides softly, and the birds warble melodiously, or the sun rises and pursues his course, or the heavenly bodies at midnight roll on harmoniously.

Tranquillity or cheerfulness is found in connection with the best qualities. Plato says, that good and bad tempers are the rule by which we may judge of the goodness or badness of the heart. "A good disposition," observes Dr. Formey, "is almost ever the mark of a good heart and a right understanding." The best moralists have been distinguished by calmness: the most successful warriors have been gifted with coolness: the most eminent sculptors, painters, and philosophers, have been celebrated for a tranquil mind and an uniform pursuit of their engagements. Our first parents, in a state of innocence, were adorned by moral graces in the same degree as the works of nature were lovely and tranquil.

—"In their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone."

And if we raise our attention from visible to invisible existences, we may contemplate minds that are never ruffled, — always active, but always happy.

A tranquil disposition is not easily depressed by the troubles of life, nor greatly elated by the smiles of fortune. It enables a man to persevere amidst difficulties, when another would be disheartened. It causes him to go on cheerfully—

"As smooth as oyle pour'd forth, and calme
As showers, and sweet as drops of balme;"

while the querulous and irritable person, like a ship without ballast, moves about, giving and receiving blows from his neighbours, and finally

oversets. "To cherish good affections," Dr. Beattie remarks, "makes a man happy; to indulge evil passions makes him wretched." Descartes observes that he was naturally impetuous and irritable; but he employed a great deal of labour in regulating his dispositions: and he adds, that "by the government of his passions, he was indebted for that serenity of mind which greatly increased his happiness." Socrates exhibited an eminent example of a naturally bad temper which was softened into calmness and good humour.

But it will be intimated by some persons, that a tranquil mind is too monotonous. There is, however, no reason why it should be so. Fine weather is not necessarily unvaried. Sometimes the sky is clear, at other times it is covered with clouds; on one occasion the sun is rising, on another we behold it setting; sometimes the atmosphere is calm, and sometimes the wind blows freshly: but this may be consistent with health and pleasure. Do the persons who contend for an irregular disposition approve of the operation or practical part of it? that is, are they better pleased with an angry address, or a pettish reply to a question, than with an affable and conciliating manner? By no means. What then do they want? That they may have the liberty of indulging their own angry dispositions, but that others may be prevented from gratifying theirs.

"Some people," observes Dr. Beattie, "are so prone to anger, that one would almost think they delighted in it;" but, strange as it may appear, a man will be most liable to be insulted by the oper-

ation of the very passion which he is the most accustomed to exercise towards others. The reason is, that he is conscious it operates in himself with a feeling of hatred towards others; and when it arises in another towards him, he concludes that it is accompanied by a similar disposition, and thus he is roused immediately. This accounts for a phenomenon in human nature — that the revengeful man is the most irritated by revenge; the bigoted person by bigotry; the scandaliser by scandal; and the angry man by anger. By the same rule, the man who indulges himself in any vice, knows that it is agreeable with his inclination; and he concludes that other persons may be influenced in a similar manner: and thus the liar will always suspect falsehood; the dishonest man will be timid of his neighbour; the ungrateful will fancy that he does not receive enough for his favours; the coward will suspect cowardice in others. The best method of cherishing a liberal disposition towards our fellow-creatures, is to possess and practise virtue ourselves.

If anger were beneficial, it might be allowed in another state of being; and then we should not enjoy continual harmony and rest, but perpetual discord. If anger be advantageous, how is it that bad men are gifted with it more frequently than good men? and how is it, that the unhappy are more liable to it than those who are happy? If it contributes more to misery than enjoyment, it must be injurious, and it ought not to be encouraged.

It has been asserted, that a sudden burst of

anger is favourable for the constitution. This is possible: and thus intemperance in eating or drinking might prove an advantage; and so might an exposure to excessive heat or cold; but these are exceptions. Anger kills more than it benefits. Many a person has fallen into a fit of apoplexy from the influence of this violent passion. If an occasional or a chance benefit be taken as a guide, we shall find nothing that is contrary to the laws of good morals, of prudence, of wit, or of wisdom, which may not be deemed advantageous.

A calm and good-tempered man is better calculated for every condition of life than an irritable person. As a servant, a master, a soldier, a general, a minister, he can serve better, and he can rule better. "If calm," Armstrong observes,—

" You reason well; see as you ought to see,
And wonder at the madness of mankind :
Seized with the common rage, you soon forget
The speculations of your wiser hours ;
Beset with furies of all deadly shapes,
Fierce and insidious, violent and slow."

Locke defines anger to be "uneasiness or discomposure of the mind, upon the receipt of any injury, with a present purpose of revenge." Violent anger of a short duration is passionateness: if it be habitual, and easily produced, it is peevishness; if it be intemperate, and continued for a long time, it is rancour or malignity. Anger arises not only from the receipt of injury, as Locke intimates, but it springs up from imaginary insults. It is doubly blind: it perceives not the innocence of those who have no intention to offend; and it discovers not

its own folly. "Anger, and the thirst of revenge," Shenstone observes, "is a kind of fever." Horace terms anger a temporary madness — "*Ira furor brevis est.*" Dr. Cheyne says, — "Anger and malice are but degrees of a frenzy, and a frenzy is one kind of raging fever." Who would willingly be mad? What a spectacle is a man on such an occasion!

"With falt'ring speech, and eyes that wildly stare,
Fierce as the tiger, madder than the seas,"

he rushes onward for the purpose of effecting the injury or destruction of others; but he frequently falls into the pit which he had made. When anger is excessive, the functions of the body are disordered, the circulation is deranged, the blood is urged forward with violence at one time, and the heart scarcely propels it at another time; and thus there is a transition from redness to paleness. It strengthens the nervous system, and weakens it. "It makes a man's body," Dr. Taylor observes, "deformed and contemptible; the voice, horrid; the eyes, cruel; the gait, fierce; the speech, clamorous and loud." Sudden excitations are generally unreasonable; the cause is seldom equal to the effect. The loss or insult which affects a person is punishment enough; but the enduring of anger is a still greater evil. A governor or teacher should be particularly careful in avoiding intemperate feelings. "Nothing," observes St. Jerome, "is more unseemly than a passionate instructor, who, when he ought to be an example of gentleness and humility to all, is distinguished on the

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contrary by fierce looks, trembling lips, intemperate noise, and unbridled revilings." Obedience should be uniform; and the performance of what is necessary should be constant: but a fierce and irregular stimulus — such as an angry man would occasion — would never produce this effect. A man should not be angry about trifles, nor be excited by contemptible persons. "Those are the greatest fools," said Lorenzo de Medicis, "who put themselves in a passion with fools." A smile is sometimes more consistent, and more influential, than a more serious notice. He is the wisest man who can avoid all excitation which would carry him beyond his own control. It should be remembered, that it is the object of an angry man to excite fear or anger: if he succeed with the former, he is maliciously gratified; and if with the latter, he immediately assumes a tranquil demeanour, and then he possesses a wonderful advantage over his adversary. Anger is most commonly weakness: men do not indulge it because they will, but because they cannot avoid it: there is, however, in such cases, a desire of injuring the offender.

An angry person will sometimes fancy that he is not blameable, for he gives no occasion of offence to others; and why, he enquires, do they offer any insult to him? But this may be the truth, — what he says and does to others is viewed in its proper light, or passed over charitably; but what other persons say and do to him is distorted, or it is examined closely, and if there be any real or imaginary cause of grievance, it excites anger. The actions in both cases may be similar; the difference

in the effects may depend on the manner of viewing them.

Tranquillity is conducive to health and enjoyment, but excitation is generally unfavourable to both: on some occasions, however, the latter has proved singularly beneficial. Atys, the son of Cræsus, was dumb for many years, but seeing one of the soldiers of Cyrus about to kill his father, he cried out, "Save King Cræsus!" and from that time he spoke plainly. Ægles, a champion of Samos, was dumb; but observing some deceit at a wrestling match, he was so much moved, that he broke the string of his tongue, and spoke for ever after. On the other hand, an excitement, and even one which is comparatively innocent, may occasion disadvantage. When Malebranche was in the decline of life, he was visited by Dr. Berkeley, a person whom he had been exceedingly desirous of seeing; and getting into controversy, they argued so energetically and so long, that the health of the French philosopher was impaired by it, and his life shortened.

As tranquillity of mind is connected with the best traits of the human character, so anger is connected with the worst: it is exhibited by the puerile and the weak. "It appears well," observes Lord Bacon, "in the weakness of those subjects in whom it reigns — children, old folks, and sick folks." The low, the contemptible, the disappointed, the ignorant, and the immoral; these are the subjects in whom this unhappy disposition most commonly dwells.

An angry temper occasions a person to be easily

discomposed : instead of being calm and firm as a rock in the ocean, which regards not the breaking of the waves, he is tossed like a log of wood by every billow. It is sometimes intended as a support to dignity, as a check to familiarity; but it generally degrades the possessor. Many men who are continually committing faults cherish passionateness, and threaten a burst of anger (as a serpent brandishes its sting and threatens a deadly wound), in order to deter any one from alluding to their improprieties. Sometimes they obtain their object; for most people would as soon tread upon a viper as agitate such a human volcano, which would immediately belch forth flames and sulphur. But a man of this kind, if he be a servant, will be dismissed; if he be a friend, he will be forsaken. He condemns himself, for he declares that his conduct will not bear investigation.

A calm and temperate person is more just in his actions than one who is irritable. He awards as much punishment as a crime may deserve, and in such a manner, that when he reviews his conduct he will not reflect on himself. But the choleric person inflicts too much, and does it in such a way, that if he have any candour he will condemn himself, and make a humiliating apology. James I. was subject to violent fits of passion. On one occasion he had a quarrel with John Gib, a gentleman of the bedchamber, who, to appease the angry monarch, fell on his knees; but the king kicked him, and Gib immediately left the royal presence. After a short time the king became cool, and was sorry for his conduct, and sent for Gib,

who after much solicitation came; and then James fell on his knees, and would not rise until the injured man had forgiven him. The servants of the late Dr. Parr would sometimes irritate their master, that they might have a scolding and a present. But a man makes himself, in such cases, somewhat like a child. The conduct of Cotys was not more rational: he was a very passionate man, and he abused his servants most violently on trifling occasions. Some one presented him with a set of handsome china, and he immediately broke it in pieces, saying, "If I had not done it the servants would, and the unpleasantness occasioned by excited feelings on so many occasions would have been more than equal to the sacrifice of the whole." Peter the Great was frequently angry; and although he had made excellent laws for the regulation of his empire, he had not acquired the art of governing himself. On one occasion he struck his gardener without a sufficient reason, and the poor man died of chagrin. Peter bitterly regretted it, and exclaimed,—“Alas! with all my achievements, I am unable to conquer myself!” It is said that the calm and amiable manners of his excellent consort usually tranquillised his boisterous feelings. All men should possess the mastery over their passions; but happy is he who, being incapable of controlling himself, possesses a wife who will throw oil on the troubled waters, and calm the tumult of his passion.

Anger frequently produces cruelty. This was the case with Peter the Great; and the sad effects of it were also seen in the conduct of Pisa, the go-

vernor of Syria. A soldier returned from an excursion alone; and the violent Roman, imagining that he had murdered or betrayed his companion, ordered the poor fellow to be hung. A moment before he was suspended the lost soldier returned, amidst the acclamations of the delighted multitude. But Piso, instead of being gratified, became more enraged; and he ordered the condemned man to be executed immediately, the missing soldier to be hung for having stayed away so long, and the hangman to share the same fate for having been so tardy in the execution of his duty. Thus were three persons sacrificed, for no fault in themselves, but for the anger and malice of another!

Luther was excessively violent in his disposition. Erasmus carried on a controversy with him; and in writing to Melancthon, he observes, in reference to his opponent,—"It is very hard for a man of my moderation and years to be obliged to write against a savage beast, and a furious wild boar." And yet how easily may a man be mistaken! Luther seems to have contrasted his own temper with one that was worse, or how could he have imagined that he was patient? He observes,—“My occasions for patience are so great, that my whole life is nothing but patience.” An angry person generally fancies himself correct: and it is not the surest way of convincing him, to intimate that he acts differently from his judgment; for the fault usually arises from his passions, which bewilder his reason and carry him astray. The madman thinks himself correct. The irritable man, therefore, and the lunatic, are mistaken; they act un-

reasonably, and sometimes ridiculously, without perceiving it. On some occasions anger should be pitied, and at other times it should be checked; for it affects not only the person himself, but a whole family, and sometimes a community. It is a sign of vulgarity when it is allowed in the company of friends; for when a man quarrels with his servants, or a mistress with her maids, before visitors, it shows that the subject of the dispute is more important than the presence of the company.

It is improper also, and exceedingly unpleasant, for a person to be continually relating his real or imaginary grievances to his neighbours. It does not follow, that because a trifling occurrence may be deemed by him important, or that an insignificant insult may be thought worthy of destroying his peace, that he should endeavour to cast the same shadow over the minds of others which had darkened his own prospect. If the listener be a man of taste, he will be disgusted: why should such dregs be brought to him? The master of the house might as well introduce the sweeping of the kitchen on the dining table, as bring before his company, in his conversation, the low conduct of indifferent persons, or the pettish remarks of servants. If the listener be an ill-tempered man, he will fan rather than check the flame: and if the object be deemed important, he will gladly take a part in the quarrel. But anger is like the bursting forth of water. "Let a man beware," observes Lord Bacon, "how he keepeth company with cholerick and quarrelsome persons, for they will engage him in their own quarrels." It is unworthy

of rational beings 'to sit down and converse about the nonsensical neglects, repulses, and insults of those with whom they associate; two thirds of which are imaginary: and thus they go on, until they have excited each other, and made themselves miserable. Is there nothing in the earth or the heavens,—in the world of nature, of art, or of science,—which would more delightfully employ them? "There are three sorts of things in the world," says the Abbé Brotier, "that know no kind of restraint, and are governed by passion and brutality,—family quarrels, religious disputes, and civil wars." How many beautiful provinces have been devastated; how many kingdoms have been ruined, and monarchs murdered; how many temples and charitable institutions have been destroyed; how many streams of blood, how many horrid choruses of wounded and dying, and how many widows and orphans have been caused, by this fiendish passion of malice and rage!

But there may be a certain degree of animation or excitation allowed on some occasions. A feeling of anger or indignation is sometimes natural and appropriate. It may serve as a check to treachery, dishonesty, a vile proposal, an indelicate relation, or a disgraceful action. Lord Bacon, in this sense, terms it "a safeguard, or mode of defence." We are commanded not to cherish it; it should arise as a sudden flash, merely to frighten away the imps of darkness. The sun should not go down on our wrath. Dr. Jeremy Taylor says, "it is a sin only when it is excessive or unreasonable." We should endeavour to avoid a perversity or

defection of judgment: we should be careful, that what is not really objectionable should not be deemed worthy of censure; for, if there be a disposition to anger, we shall be too often inclined to take any plea, real or pretended, for its indulgence.

When any thing transpires which is apparently unfair or improper, we should examine into its merits before we declaim on its demerits. It is better to state an objection than to harbour a suspicious thought: the former may be answered, and the matter may be satisfactorily explained; but the latter is like smouldering fire, which consumes the vitals. Some people receive, or fancy they receive, an insult; and instead of noticing it, and obtaining an immediate explanation, they treasure it up, think upon it, magnify it, and suffer silently. Sometimes, like Ixion, they procure for themselves a continual torment. The temper which occasionally expresses disapprobation may be honest and happy; the other will be haughty and miserable. There is a great difference between not noticing trifles, and observing them but not speaking of them. That is a great mind which will pass over unimportant matters: that mind is less which will take cognizance of trifles, and speak of them: but that mind is still lower which will notice them and say nothing, but brood upon them until they grow from mole-hills to mountains.

In order to prevent or check this disposition, a spirit of good-humour must be cultivated; and this may be best produced by regular and pleasing engagements, so that the mind may be employed and preserved from anxious thoughts, and the body be

kept in a healthy and vigorous state. Regnard, the French poet, used to observe, "that a happy state of mind is to be found only in some business or profession, which arrests the mind in the same way as an anchor does a ship." We should also cultivate charity. There are many reasons for the indulgence of this disposition. By the constitution of the mind and the nature of things, we ourselves are continually liable to error. By the exercise of illiberality, we do not improve our happiness or the condition of our fellow-creatures. He that is most acute and most severe in discovering failings, is not the most successful in preventing them; therefore Bishop Taylor advises that we "use all reasonable means to excuse the faults of others." But many persons are so perversely inclined, that they would rather condemn a man in twenty instances, than suffer a faulty act to pass unnoticed; and they would rather anathematise every human being, than allow a few unworthy men to escape reproof. They possess a taste for censuring; and they run about to seek for food. "Go not out," observes the excellent writer from whom I have just quoted, "to gather sticks to kindle a fire to burn thine own house." But these people not only find defects, but they magnify them; "and this," as Lord Bacon remarks, "doth irritate contradiction, and produce envy and scorn." It has been recommended to choleric persons that they should keep their tongues quiet, or retire, or repeat the letters of the alphabet, or count one hundred, or keep water in the mouth,—all of which would direct the mind from the subject of attention, and

CHAP. XII.

ON CONTENTMENT AND DISSATISFACTION.

CONTENTMENT is calmness and serenity, which avoids, on the one hand, joy or hilarity; and on the other, gloom or depression. It adapts itself to the circumstances in which it may be placed: it is like the majestic oak of the valley, or the cedar of the mountain, or the pine among the snows in Norway, or the mahogany tree on the burning rocks of the West Indian islands, or the chesnut on the margin of volcanoes, which thrives amidst all its disadvantages, and delights itself in its vigour and its foliage. With contentment a person cannot fail of being happy; without it he must be miserable. "Contentedness," observes the excellent Jeremy Taylor, "produces great peace of spirit. It is the great and only instrument of temporal felicity." It depends not on rank or riches, for the poor man may be pleased; his wishes being small may be gratified, while the monarch may be fretting himself with disappointments. A labourer may feel as much enjoyment in cultivating a rood of ground for his own subsistence, as an emperor would in governing his wide dominions; for the peasant, bred —

—— "in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracted, fits him for the soil;"

but the monarch may be ambitious, envious, revengeful, and discontented; he may be unbounded in his desires, while the sphere in which he acts must necessarily be bounded.

The Almighty has made men dependent for their comfort, in some degree, on food and raiment. In civilised society money is needful for providing these things; labour is necessary for procuring money; mental ability is required for the proper direction of labour; and health is necessary for the full enjoyment of all other blessings; — but with these, in a moderate degree (and most men enjoy them) a person may be contented and happy. Xenophon thought there was more unhappiness than enjoyment in the world; but Seneca says, — “If we consider the bounties of Providence, we may conclude that the Governor of the world has not only supplied men with what may be necessary, but he has allowed him to enjoy many of the sweets and delicacies of life.” If a little will not please a person, a larger sum will not supply his wants. Why is a man displeased with one hundred pounds, and desirous of obtaining a thousand? Is it because the latter sum would gratify his wishes? — By no means; for if he had one hundred thousand pounds, he would look with a longing eye on many elegant mansions and delightful estates, which could not be purchased with this amount. Let the sum be increased to a million, and the difficulty of producing satisfaction would still remain. If the whole world were possessed by one person, there is no reason why he should not wish to have Venus, or Mars, or Jupiter. Besides, gratification increases

desire; it satisfies for a moment, but it produces a stimulus for the acquirement of more. Supply the demands of avarice, therefore, and you will make it doubly avaricious. If happiness can only be attained by possessing greater wealth, gratify the first demand, and you will make the person doubly miserable. "No person," observes Jeremy Taylor, "is poor that does not think himself so; but if, in a full fortune, with impatience he desires more, he proclaims his wants and his beggarly condition." The mountaineer, with health and a humble maintenance, may be contented and happy. Thomson says of the Laplanders, —

" They ask no more than simple nature gives;
They love their mountains, and enjoy their storms."

The savage is attached to his forests and his hut, to his dogs and his gun, to his wives and his children. The African delights in the elephant and lion hunt; the Arab is charmed with deserts; the Egyptian admires his Nile-covered country; the Indian delights in his residence of palm-leaves, his temperate food, his temples, and sacred rivers; the Esquimaux loves his snows, his icy dwelling, and his spear. Every man possesses something which attracts and retains his affection; and every nation is influenced by some sacred tie which binds it to its native soil. Bayle supposes that the persons who possess the greatest degree of contentment are not the rich and luxurious, but peasants, and those who occupy the lower conditions of life. Socrates, when he searched for happiness, turned away his eyes from the court of Cræsus.

Dr. Johnson says, "It has been observed in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happiness; and that those whom the splendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summits of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy in those who look up to them from a lower station." The eminent Balzac was favoured with a handsome income; he possessed the comforts and many of the elegancies of life: and yet, instead of being satisfied, he considered himself neglected by fortune; he desired more than he possessed, he was discontented with what he had, and thus he was unhappy. "O that I were a private man!" exclaimed one of the Alphonsos of Aragon, "for then I would live at my ease; but kings cannot do so." Empedocles, when he was offered a crown by the Agrigentines, refused it. Those who have filled the highest offices of the state, and have received the plaudits of thousands, are well aware that this alone will not produce contentment. Indeed, it has been generally found, that he who increases his power and his territories increases also his sorrow.

But depression and the loss of earthly good may be attended with resignation, if the mind be properly disposed. Some men are firm and cheerful under almost any circumstances. This arises sometimes from a healthy body and cheerful spirits; but at other times from education, from a hardy training. Lord Granville was a good-humoured man: it is said that he laughed when he entered into office, and when he went out. The Prince of

Condé was a man of great firmness. When he was arrested by Cardinal Mazarin, and sent to the castle of Vincennes, where there was no fire, no bed, and scarcely any thing necessary for the support of life, he ate an egg, and laid himself on a bundle of reeds, where he slept comfortably for twelve hours. Henry, Duke of Guise, was remarkable for a similar disposition : he says of himself,—“ Neither in my exile at Rome, nor when I was taken prisoner, nor during all the time that I remained in Naples, could any person observe any change or alteration in my countenance. The different events of bad or good fortune never gave me any disquietude ; having always acted with the same *sang froid* in every thing as if I had no interest in it.” This may sometimes degenerate into an unfeeling or callous disposition, which would make a man indifferent to actual good and evil ; but when it cheers a person in misfortune, and regulates him in prosperity, guides him in the middle of his life, and supports him in his declining days, it cannot be injurious. That is a happy art which will allow a person to derive pleasure and amusement from the circumstances in which he may be placed. Many a captive has amused himself with his chains, and derived pleasing thoughts from the circumstances which, at another time, would have made him gloomy ; and many a person in a cold and dark dungeon has elevated his mind to the regions of intellectual light, and made himself happy in captivity : and thus the martyr at the stake, enveloped by flames, has been strengthened and animated with the prospect of a crown of im-

mortality. The accumulating clouds and darkness of old age need not occasion unhappiness. The winter of the polar regions drives the inhabitants into their snowy caves; and the hoary head of three-score years and ten may warn a man to retire within himself, to observe his own decay, and prepare himself for a happy exit. Professor Stewart observes: "One old man I have, myself, had the good fortune to know, who, after a long, an active, and an honourable life, having begun to feel some of the usual effects of advanced years, has been able to find resources, in his own sagacity, against most of the inconveniences with which they are commonly attended; and who, by watching his gradual decline with the cool eye of an indifferent observer, and employing his ingenuity to retard its progress, has converted even the infirmities of age into a source of philosophical amusement."

When the mind is animated by a powerful principle, when it is set upon the attainment of an important object, it will sacrifice ease and many other comforts for the purpose of obtaining success. In this case it becomes, of course, a question of gain or loss. A lesser advantage is sacrificed for a greater. The lover of learning will devote his time, his property, and even his health for the acquirement of knowledge; every effort, every kind of self-denial, will be accompanied with feelings of contentment. The lover of wealth will exert his bodily and mental powers for the attainment of the golden prize which his imagination holds out to view, and, if success attend his labours, he will not regret his toil. The lover of virtue and piety will,

by the same rule, sacrifice his earthly good for a dwelling in the skies. Contentment is consequently the balm for every wound, the rest for labour, the compensation for self-denial, the support in weariness, hunger, thirst, and danger. Bishop Taylor says: "God hath appointed one remedy for all the evils in the world, and that is a contented spirit; for this alone makes a man pass through fire and not be scorched, through seas and not be drowned, through hunger and nakedness and want nothing."

Sometimes there is an affected tranquillity, a hope and a satisfaction forcibly wrested from despair. Satan exclaims in "Paradise Lost," — "Evil, be thou my good!" And Richard II., when Bolingbroke was about to take the sceptre, said —

"What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The king shall do it. Must he be deposed?
The king shall be contented. Must he lose
The name of king? O' God's name, let it go:
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
My gay apparel for an alms-man's gown;
My figured goblets for a dish of wood;
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;
My subjects for a pair of carved saints;
And my large kingdom for a little grave."

But this is very different from true contentment; it is a fancied triumph over an enemy by submission. The galling pressure of the yoke soon occasions lamentation and regret.

Contentment is the genuine source of cheerfulness: if the mind be uneasy, the thoughts and dispositions cannot flow in such a manner as will be

pleasing to those with whom we associate. There is a perpetual sunshine in the breast where true contentment dwells; the possessor of it, as Sir Thomas Browne beautifully observes, "sits quietly in the soft showers of Providence." Pope alludes to an equable disposition when he says, —

" Oh ! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day."

Many influences are calculated to produce a feeling of contentment, — limited desires, and the attainment of moderate possessions; the practice of virtue, and the cultivation of liberality; the remembrance of past disadvantages and the experience of present blessings; the belief in a presiding Deity, and a future state of existence: these tend to exhilarate and satisfy the mind. Men who have been engaged in arduous undertakings which terminated successfully, if they were afterwards allowed to enjoy safety and tranquillity, have experienced a feeling of contentment. The veteran may feel something of this sort when he talks of

——" Most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes ;"

and when the spirit of heroism rises within him, and the remembrance of former deeds warms and animates his aged limbs, he may, as Goldsmith says, —

" Shoulder his crutch, and show how fields were won."

The seaman may remember and relate his adven-

tures of storms and shipwrecks; of intercourse with barbarous and civilised nations; of successful speculations and rapid voyages. The literary man may enjoy a feeling of satisfaction, when, without envy or undue ambition, he has climbed high and maintained his footing, and when he expects that, after he shall have left this world, a feeling of esteem will remain in the memory of man as a tribute to his successful labours for the welfare and happiness of society. The monarch, when he has employed his influence for the encouragement of industry, fidelity, and merit, — when he has wielded the sword of justice, as a shield to virtue and a terror to vice, — may, in his latter days, if there be tranquillity at home and abroad, feel a satisfaction in the result of his exertions.

But he that acts unjustly, who rules with a rod of iron, punishing alike the vicious and the virtuous, if they will not obey his tyrannical commands, — this man will make for himself a couch of thorns, whereon he will writhe and repent in the evening of his days. Even in the lower conditions of life, a person who has broken the laws of his Maker, and violated the written or the customary regulations of society, will be shunned and despised; while he will be dissatisfied and morose with all around him.

A poor man may be discontented: he may dislike his cot, his wages, his labour, his wife, his family, and himself. A rich man may be dissatisfied. Fontenelle, who abounded not in wealth, used to say, — “What made me satisfied with my condition was this: the Cardinal Dubois, who had power and riches, used to come to me to be

comforted; but I, who had little of either, never went to him for the same purpose." Consequently, that powerful minister was more dependent and more pitiable than Fontenelle. The desires of man must be diminished: the helm of reason must be regulated by a powerful arm, or the bark of human enjoyment will become the sport of winds and waves. "The heart," observes Hugo, "is a small thing, but it desireth great matters."

Some men are continually displeased with what they are, and with what they have, and they are anxiously desirous of what they cannot be. They run to and fro, without the regulation of reason, or the enjoyment of their wishes. They endeavour to sail against the stream, and, although they are striving to gain the haven of desire, yet they are continually drifting from it. In important and in trivial matters the same peculiarity is visible. If the weather be warm, they wish to have it cold; if the sun shine brightly, they wish to have it cloudy; if the weather be rainy, they want to have it dry; and if dry, they are desirous of a shower: if cold, they wish for hot weather; and if hot, they want a change. In the summer, they wish to have the cool and bracing air of winter, with the cheerful parlour and the blazing fire of a December evening; in the winter, they want the brilliant days and the verdure of summer. If they are losing in their mercantile engagements, they are grieved most sorely; and well they may, for a loss to one may prove a loss to others: but if they are gaining, they complain that they cannot be more successful. If they are engaged in a profession, they are dissatisfied, perhaps, because no one

demands their services; and if their practice be good, they are discontented because they are obliged to labour so much. When they are at home they are uneasy, they must go abroad in the pursuit of new scenes and new enjoyments; when they are in company, they give and take offence; when they are travelling, they complain of the scenery, the roads, the innkeepers, the horses, and the postilions. When they are moving from one place to another, they are fatigued; when they are stationary, every thing is dull: and thus, except the mind be disposed to contentment, external circumstances will produce but little happiness.

Discontentment produces discontentment; in the same way as cheerfulness, cheerfulness; laughter, laughter; weeping, tears; and yawning, yawning. In a family, for instance, a trivial occurrence excites the spleen of an ill-tempered person, and he snaps upon another; the other is irritated, and he snaps upon the next; and thus it passes round, in the same manner as it does with the Esquimaux dogs in a sledge. If one of these animals receives a lash from the driver, he bites the next, and the next bites his neighbour, until all the dogs have had their share of punishment.

Some men are discontented because they are obscure; others, because they are subject to the inconvenience of popularity. Balzac was an elegant writer; but he complained that he was continually harassed with communications from all parts of the world. Sometimes he had fifty or sixty letters on his table, all of which must be answered; and the answers must be elegant, such as

might be shown, admired, and printed. Some men have been raised to a great height in literary fame; but there has been a worm at the root of contentment, which has caused the plant to wither; and others, having looked to honour and elevation as a source of enjoyment, have become disconcerted and gloomy when the sunshine of favour has diminished. This, as Dr. Johnson observes, was the case with Gay. It is questionable whether any earthly blessing be contributive to happiness, if a man cannot bear to part with it; for we are so much inclined to look forward, to calculate on probabilities and possibilities, that if we fancy our happiness is dependent on present good, and we cannot endure the thought of losing it, we shall derive almost as much anxiety from it as contentment. But if a man enjoy the present, and possess a sufficient degree of fortitude to enable him to part with it—whenever the Almighty may deem proper—he will be much more tranquil. Seneca has observed, that the anxiety arising from the fear of losing is equal to the pleasure produced by the consciousness of possessing. Some men are discontented because they have so much affliction, and others are dissatisfied because they have no cause for sorrow. Caligula complained, that in his day there were no great calamities—such as might occasion his reign to be celebrated by historians. Bayle has observed, that no evil is insignificant which is considered great; and nothing makes a man more uneasy than a consciousness of having nothing to make him uneasy. Apparent trouble, in this case, becomes actual

trouble. A reality only affects us according to its appearance; and an appearance regulates our opinion with regard to the reality. Polycrates of Samos was discontented with his continual prosperity; and, in order to vary his experience, he threw his most valuable jewel into the sea. Some men are unfortunate in almost all their endeavours, — they sink notwithstanding their efforts; others are uniformly successful, — they sail gaily on the tide that sets for fortune. This was the case with Polycrates: the jewel was swallowed by a fish, the fish was taken, and the jewel was restored.

People sometimes cherish repining at their condition. Instead of pleasing themselves as much as possible, and pleasing others, they seem to try how much they can increase their difficulties and misery. The Earl of Stirling says,—

“ The minde of man, which many a fancy tosses,
Doth forge unto itself a thousand crosses.”

“ There are some people,” Dr. Beattie observes, “ who, from an affectation of extreme delicacy, are at pains to multiply their antipathies and other singularities, to the no small molestation of themselves as well as others.” They seem to be eminently prolific

“ In odd perverse antipathies;
In falling out with that or this,
And finding something still amiss;
More peevish, cross, and splenetic,
Than dog distract, or monkey sick.”—BUTLER.

A warm day occasions them to be dreadfully fatigued if they walk, suffocated if they ride, and enervated if they stay at home. Wet weather

makes them horribly dirty if they go abroad, and shockingly gloomy if they continue within doors. Men, manners, and things are equally blackened with overstrained epithets; one thing is hideously ugly, another is odiously stiff, a third is horribly hateful, and a fourth is dreadful, terrible, shocking, hideous, detestable, or abominable! This disposition arises frequently from an affectation of expressing discontentment with every thing, as if it were not equal to their own worth and expectations; or as if they had been accustomed to something better, or as if an ill temper were a sign of gentility; and thus, because they will go beyond the vulgar in their antipathies, they will use the most extravagant language. An eccentricity of this kind is sometimes accompanied by fainting, hysterics, and other objectionable practices,—all about nothing!

Some people are tolerably well pleased with the present, but they are anxious about the future. Dr. Jeremy Taylor has very reasonably said, "Enjoy the present, and be not solicitous for the future; for if you take your foot from the present standing, and thrust it forwards towards to-morrow's event, you are in a restless condition." Others are dissatisfied with present advantages, and can be supported only by future prospects; but this is throwing away the wheat for the sake of the chaff. If a man be not contented with what he now possesses, how will he be with what he may possess in future? Besides, he will not be animated to the performance of his necessary duties; he will not maintain a regular plodding, which his engage-

ments for a maintenance may demand, when the imagination paints the future so attractively. For it is like the beaming of the sun upon the distant clouds, which may give to the beholder the resemblance of splendid temples, of domes, colonnades, and magnificent entrances ; but if the spectator were removed to the same situation, he would behold nothing but a dark and chilly vapour : so the man that despises the present, and looks for contentment in the future, will be continually liable to chagrin and disappointment.

We meet with people, sometimes, who seem to imagine that there is no merit in passing over little grievances, and treating them with indifference : they fancy it is better to think on them a little, to grieve about them, and then to cast them aside ; because this will make the matter more heroic, and more worthy of the favour of Heaven :—in the same way as a person who is about to impart a favour looks over the amount of the sacrifice, and magnifies it, and shows the receiver how great it is, and how great is his obligation !

An unhealthy state of the body is frequently a cause of discontentment. When the nerves become disordered, a man is scarcely master of himself ; but he should regulate his disposition while he is vigorous, and then the passions will not at any time be so liable to go astray. Nothing will compensate for the absence of health. Thomson enquires, —

“ Ah ! what avails the largest gifts of Heaven,
When drooping health and spirits go amiss ? ”

Sometimes gloom and melancholy come upon a person from a disordered body and a discontented spirit, which, seeking for the greatest woe to prey upon, looks immediately to a future state, and calculates on everlasting perdition. Dr. Cheyne observes, "There is a kind of melancholy which is called religious, because it is connected with matters of religion, although often the people so distempered have little solid piety. It is merely a bodily disease, produced by an ill habit of constitution, wherein the nervous system is broken and disordered, and the juices become viscid and glewy. This melancholy arises generally from a disgust or disrelish of worldly amusements and creature-comforts, whereupon the mind turns to religion for consolation and peace. But as the person is in a very imperfect and unmortified state, — not duly instructed and disciplined, and ignorant how to govern himself, — there ensue fluctuation and indocility, scrupulosity, horror, and despair." Let the corporeal part of man, then, as well as his mental disposition and his passions, be carefully governed, and if a person would fly from the greatest evil — that Charybdis of human woe — let him avoid habitual dissatisfaction; let him avoid gloominess and sourness of spirit; for, as Milton says, —

—"He that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon."

It is generally found that a person who is dissatisfied with himself and his own possessions is not very pleasing to others. Henry IV. of France

used to say, "I cannot willingly employ a gloomy person, for a man that is ill-humoured to himself cannot be good-humoured to other persons." Indeed, as a confirmation of this opinion, Regnier used to confess, that he never became dissatisfied with his fellow-creatures until he had become displeased with himself.

In order to produce a tranquil and contented spirit, let a man, when he draws a contrast between himself and others, direct his attention below his own condition rather than above it: let him place his own wealth by the side of his neighbour's poverty, or his own poverty by the side of abject wretchedness. Let him learn to value the blessings of life — not so highly as to feel very unhappy at their possible or actual loss, nor to make himself very uneasy for an accumulation of wealth, honours, or power. Let him reflect, that he enjoys most probably more than he deserves, and that his life was only intended by the great Author of his being as an introduction to a more durable and happy state of existence; but let him begin to be contented now, not postpone it from year to year, and die without enjoying it. Contentment in expectation is not contentment; and if expectation continue there never will be contentment. When Pyrrhus recapitulated all his intended achievements to his counsellor Cyneas, the minister enquired, "And what then?"—"Why then," replied Pyrrhus, "I will rest myself contented."—"But, for God's sake," said Cyneas, "cannot you do so now?"

CHAP. XIII.

ON HUMILITY AND PRIDE.

IN civilised society, human beings confer and receive commendation, honour, and distinction, as a reward for the practice of virtue and the performance of actions which are beneficial to mankind; but the inclination for applause varies exceedingly in different persons. Some men anxiously court attention; they almost live for the purpose of being seen and admired: others retire from the public walks of life, and perform their duty for the purpose of satisfying their own consciences and pleasing the Deity. Those who expect too much regard from their fellow-creatures are proud: those who are most forward to exhibit and speak of their own good qualities, for the purpose of gratifying themselves, are vain and conceited: those who act well, and shun rather than seek the high opinion of mankind, are humble. Men of the latter class are generally liberal and charitable towards their fellow-creatures: this feeling is essential to the possession and practice of virtue. "No man," observes Dr. Beattie, "is truly pious but he who is humble, distrustful of himself, anxious to do good to others, and willing to think of them as favourably as possible." Humility may be carried to an extreme; for instance, when a man declines the

honours which are customary and consistent with high offices, or when he suffers his moral character to be depreciated, — in both cases an injury is done to society.

Humility is admired by all men; but, like many other virtues, it is seldom practised. "It is," observes Selden, "a virtue that all preach, none practise, and all are content to hear." Humility is sometimes shown by words, which express a low opinion of the speaker; but this must be unstudied: it must arise from a conviction of the reality, otherwise it would probably be a snare to obtain flattery. It may be evinced by actions, in giving the precedence to equals, and even in some cases to inferiors; but it must not break down the natural gradations of society. Dress may be a means of exhibiting humility, when it is comparatively simple, and inferior rather than superior to the clothing which is usually worn by sensible persons in the same rank of society, and when it is used for comfort and a respectable appearance rather than the gratification of vanity and ostentation.

Extravagance in dress has generally kept pace with luxury in other respects. Some nations, as the Patagonians, have only worn a loose skin about them; others, like the Egyptians and the Jews, have worn expensive clothing and costly jewels. Isaiah alludes to the extravagant dress of the Jewish ladies. It was customary among all the Oriental nations to wear ornaments; and thus it is said in Genesis, that Abraham's servant provided Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, with bracelets for the hands and rings for the ears. In Arabia

and Persia the females are decorated with gold and silver rings about the wrists and the ankles. In Cairo the hair is worn in tresses almost to the heels, and adorned with jewels. In Aleppo the ladies dress their hair with hyacinths, violets, and other flowers, intermixed with precious stones. The men, as well as women, wear expensive and sometimes ponderous ornaments in their ears. The Indians adorn their noses, ears, arms, and legs with the most costly stones and metals. In Rome and Greece several laws were made for the purpose of checking luxury: among others which were introduced by Zeleucis for the Locrians, it was said that no woman should decorate herself with golden ornaments, except she were a harlot.

A person is bound to avoid expensive and gaudy apparel for several reasons. A great deal of time is required for choosing, for arranging, and for exhibiting it to advantage; much money is necessary for purchasing it — in many cases more than can be afforded, in others it might be better employed: for although luxury produces an advantage, yet it occasions an evil; and the latter is generally greater than the former. The advocates for extravagance maintain that it is necessary for the welfare of a state; but let a person look at the history of kingdoms which have been temperate and prudent, and at others which have been luxurious, and then let him decide which were the more powerful and happy. Because an advantage may be produced in some cases by a particular custom or disposition, it does not follow that its influence must be generally good. Another reason is, that

fashions are usually established and patronised most warmly by persons of an unintellectual character : consequently, those who follow these things should merely suffer themselves to be carried in some small degree by the stream of custom ; they should not swim with it. But every one desires to be somewhat like his neighbour ; and hence, as Churchill says, he

—“ Bends to fashion, and obeys the rules
Imposed at first, and since observed, by fools.”

This writer, however, was rather too severe ; but he was a sloven himself, and despised, more than he ought, an attention to dress. Many men have been slovenly, not from humility, but from carelessness : among these have been many intellectual characters, who have cared little about the usages and fashions of society. Religious men have done the same. Cowper says, in contrasting this disposition with niceness and foppery,—

—— “ A heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;
But how a body, so fantastic, trim,
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge a heavenly mind, demands a doubt.”

But carelessness in dress will sometimes produce dirtiness ; and thus some of the cynics were as filthy as they were careless ; and some of the anchorets in the East are exceedingly dirty. Sometimes a man practises slovenliness from a feeling of pride ; and grandeur, which is generally the result of pride, may be opposed by the same

feeling. When Diogenes trampled on the handsome carpets in the residence of Plato, he exclaimed, — “Thus I trample on the pride of Plato!” The wealthy philosopher replied, — “And with greater pride.” Some men gratify themselves by one method, and others by the opposite; but it does not follow that a person who severely condemns the practices of others must be free from improper feelings himself. A great and striking variation from the usual custom of dress is frequently occasioned by a desire of exciting attention in one way, more effectually than it could be produced in another way. Sometimes it arises from a feeling of spiritual pride — the person deems himself more holy than others. An adoption of all the follies of fashion is improper, and indicative of a little mind: the principal adorning ought not to be bodily, but mental. On the other hand, a marked deviation is indicative of hatred and conceit: there may be as much pride under a plain bonnet as beneath a showy and handsome one; and there will probably be much less amiability in the former case than in the latter. But a person who wears what is provided, being careful to avoid extremes, — who thinks about clothing only because it will produce comfort and a consistent respectability, — is by far the most rational person. A waste of time and the indulgence of conceit are two of the principal disadvantages which are connected with an attention to dress; but they who studiously avoid, may be as guilty of both as they who studiously follow.

There are certain exhibitions of splendour and

power connected with high situations in the state which no one, humble as he may be, should neglect. He should not lower the dignity of a sovereign, a chancellor, or a magistrate, to that of a private citizen; for mankind in general are very much influenced by appearances: and thus a person in plain clothing, seated on the bench in the performance of judicial business, would attract less attention and command less respect than if he were robed and decorated with all the insignia of his office. "Augustus Cæsar," says the Archbishop of Cambray, "represented to a barbarous audience, would command more respect if seated on the Mogul's golden throne, sparkling with gems, than in the curule chair, to which power, not pomp, gave dignity." It is not reasonable to reply,—“People should know better;” for the fact is, they must be taught, and then there will be no occasion for external pomp: but the lower classes will not soon become conversant with abstract power, influence, and justice, in the same way as they are with the authority and dignity which are evident to the senses. A great number of persons, even in civilised countries, are unable to read, many more to write, and a still greater number to think with propriety. There is a disposition in the present day not only to speak of mankind as if they were learned, but to calculate on their moral virtue, as if they were perfected and made superior to all the prejudices and feelings of humanity. But such speculators, by a little more investigation, and by practical illustrations of what mankind generally are, may confess with Horne

Tooke (in the preface to his "Diversions of Purley"), "I was guilty of two egregious blunders, by attributing a much greater portion of virtue to individuals, and of understanding to the generality, than any experience of mine can justify." Men should not be elevated to a character above humanity, nor should they be degraded to the level of brutishness; but authors, when they have a favourite theory to support, do not scruple to do either.

The most intellectual men are affected by the pomp of the higher courts of justice; and if so, why should not the vulgar, who have passions and prejudices equally unruly, and who are less accustomed to rank and grandeur? Even the wordiness and high-sounding language of the forms of law produce a feeling of attention and awe in those who would care little about a composition in simple English.

In different countries, dissimilar notions have existed of pride and humility. What would be ignoble in one has been deemed allowable and honourable in another. In Persia, the king "will enter a house," observes Pietro delle Valle, "and dine on whatever the family may have provided for itself." In Arabia, a prince will sit on the ground before the door of his palace and eat his dinner, and invite any of the passengers, even beggars, to come and partake of his meal; and many will sit down with him. And yet, in Persia, the inferior people, on public occasions, fall down before their sovereign and kiss the ground. Alexander, when he had conquered the kingdoms of the East, compelled the inhabitants to pay him the same homage

which they had been accustomed to give to their monarchs. In Arabia, the lower classes kiss the knees and the feet of their superiors.

Sometimes notions of dignity seem to be dependent on mere caprice; but custom has appointed a certain homage to rank, and the laws of a country compel the observance of it. In the territories of the Iman of Sana, in Arabia, none but a prince of the blood is permitted to use an umbrella. At Tripoli, none but the Pasha is allowed to sit in the corner of the room. In Ethiopia and Persia, it is not deemed consistent with dignity for the sovereign to wear his crown in public processions, but it is placed on one of his horses. Whatever, by common consent, is made honourable or ignoble may be deemed to be so, although, abstractedly considered, it may have nothing to do with either.

On some occasions humility is professed, but not possessed. Indeed the pretension, or boast of humility, is a proof of its absence. In the complimentary addresses of letters much more is expressed than is meant; and the concluding part of the epistle lowers the writer much more than the writer intends; but in these cases there is an understanding which prevents the reader from taking the words literally. The same may be said of the professions of subjects to sovereigns: the Arab governors, for instance, term themselves the "Sultan's slave's slave;" but they have not the more humility for this profession.

There are many erroneous opinions with regard to humility. Some persons imagine that the rich

alone are bound to practise it; that they must bring themselves down; but to what level must they come? The answer will readily be seen: they must lower themselves to the level of the objectors. The fact is, these persons wish the wealthy and the eminent to keep company with them; they wish to raise themselves. They know that by the lowering of others they shall obtain respect: for what the higher classes lose they will gain; and thus they fall into the very evil which they condemn. They object to pride in others, that they may gratify pride in themselves. Sometimes, in order to succeed, they will use opprobrious epithets; and thus, the terms proud, haughty, &c. are liberally bestowed on those who move in the sphere to which they have been accustomed, and who maintain their station without arrogance or ostentation. If some must be greater, some must be less; and as happiness is not dependent on rank so much as on a tranquil spirit (and this may be obtained in any condition), let all endeavour to be contented. The sensible man will assume as little as possible; but if he has merit he will be honoured. The continual complainer of the conduct of others is most commonly an unprincipled declaimer against what he himself would practise, most unjustifiably, if he were placed in the condition of the persons who are the objects of his abuse.

The good opinion of our fellow-creatures is a source of satisfaction, and, like many other influences, it may produce a good effect: it has occasioned many of the noblest exertions and the greatest benefits which the annals of history have

recorded. The humble man may use it temperately, and suffer himself to be influenced so far as to maintain a good name, and prevent any disgrace from coming on himself or his profession. If men are judged harshly by others, they are sorrowful or indignant. Literary men and warriors, of too much sensibility, have died of a broken heart, when, after expecting fame, and the applause of mankind, they have been loaded with unmerited calumny. Even St. Paul demanded the honours which were due to him, on account of birth, talents, and labours. He that pretends to be unaffected by this feeling is deranged, or he is a hypocrite, or he is shamefully abandoned to vice, and has no character to lose, or no hopes of obtaining a good one. It is not inconsistent with humility for a person to endeavour to raise himself; but he should be temperate, he should never make it his principal object. He is bound, also, in the language of Scripture, to be willing to esteem others better than himself, that is, in any doubtful case; and he should endeavour to under-rate rather than over-rate his own abilities and worth.

A certain gradation of rank is beneficial to society. "I must own myself," (observes Sir Jonah Barrington, who seems to know pretty much of the world,) "a zealous contender for distinction of ranks; and I must state my decided opinion, that nothing but superior talents, learning, military reputation, or some other quality, which raises men by general consent, should be permitted to amalgamate society." But it is a foolish and an unjustifiable feeling which would carry this dis-

inction beyond a moderate bound. Like the members of the body, some are adapted for higher and more important offices; but every kind of superiority should be held with a gentle hand, and the reins of government should be managed in the same way as the pilot guides the ship, without stir and ostentation. Contempt, haughtiness, and such unworthy and odious feelings should never be cherished by one man towards another. Suppose our neighbour be poorer, is he faulty, if it did not arise from folly or vice? And if he be ignorant, those who know better are bound to instruct him. Great external distinctions are patronised chiefly by those who have small internal capabilities. There may be a dignity of office maintained for the good of society; and yet the persons who fill it may be at other times without ostentation. A great distinction of rank does not arise from civilisation; for in countries which are almost barbarous the most marked variations exist. In China, the difference between the lower classes and the higher is very great. In Arabia, the princesses wear golden rings on their fingers, to which little bells are fastened, that the common people may have notice of their dignity, and give them the honours which they claim. But, among the more enlightened inhabitants of Europe, the higher ranks receive no homage but what birth and merit may deserve. In the Sandwich Islands the chiefs were accustomed to exact the most degrading homage from the people; but now, when knowledge and civilisation exist among them, these strongly marked distinctions are dying away. Con-

sequently, the peculiarity to which I have alluded is not the result of virtue or greatness of mind, but rather of brutality and ignorance.

Pride produces unhappiness, — humility, tranquillity. “Proud men,” observes Dr. Beattie, “are continually beset with affronts real or imaginary, and harassed with anger, indignation, revenge, and other pernicious and painful emotions, from which the humble are entirely free.” Conceit or vanity occasions other effects. A person of this kind is highly delighted with himself, sometimes amusingly so, while he is tolerably well disposed towards others. Pride is like the stately turkey, which gloomily and contemptuously strides along; conceit is like the sun-flower, which impudently turns and stares at the sun; while humility is like a lovely flower, which is almost hidden among more prominent and less beautiful plants.

From a mixture of discontentment, pride, and conceit, accompanied by a warm imagination, men become sometimes inordinately ambitious. A moderate degree of this feeling may be productive of good, but an excess is hurtful to the possessor and injurious to society. An ambitious man is displeased with his present condition, and he seeks for happiness in an accumulation of wealth and power. “Some fantastic spirits,” observes Dr. Taylor, “will walk alone, and dream waking of greatnesses, of palaces, of excellent orations, full theatres, loud applauses, sudden advancement, great fortunes, and so will spend an hour with imaginative pleasure, all their employment being nothing but fumes of pride, and secret indefinite desires and significa-

tions of what the heart wishes." How uncertain and how unsatisfactory is the undue pursuit of eminence ! Cardinal Wolsey exclaims —

——“ I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
These many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth ; my high-blown pride
At length broke under me, and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.”

When ambition guides the mind, ease, honour, and character will be sacrificed for the purpose of advancement. Such men will lick the very dust in order to obtain the favour of those in power. Cardinal du Bois rose by abject meanness ; the Regent (Duke of Orleans) sometimes kicked him out of his presence : but by perseverance he raised himself, and obtained lucrative situations for all who would pay him handsomely.

The mere accumulation of wealth is productive of little advantage : the acquirement of titles is almost useless, except there be moral and intellectual worth to adorn them : the introduction to high society is worth nothing, if there be not better manners and a higher degree of information. If a person be greatly exalted, he is

——“ The aim of every dangerous shot ;
A sign of dignity, a breath, a bubble ;”

or, as it is said by the same correct observer of human nature, he becomes

——“ Like a drunken sailor on the mast,
Ready, with every nod, to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.”

He exposes himself to real evils for a trifling good. If such people obtain the object of pursuit, they enjoy neither ease nor independence. "Men in great place," observes Lord Bacon, "are thrice servants, servants of the sovereign or state, servants of fame, and servants of business, — so they have no freedom." There is a great deal of attraction in the splendours of a court; but who will imagine that the amount of contentment is equally great? Do not envy, pride, malice, treachery, and hypocrisy lurk among the gorgeous pageantry of a palace? Besides, how uncertain is the tenure of royal favour and worldly greatness! How easy is the transition from eminence to degradation, from freedom to a dungeon, from a throne to the scaffold! When Pope Alexander VI. was passing through a town in Italy, he observed the populace removing a statue of his unsuccessful rival from a pedestal where it had been almost worshipped, to a gallows where it was to be hung; and he exclaimed to his son,—"Vide, mi fili, quantum distat inter statuum et patibulum!"—"Behold, my son, how easy is the change from a statue to a gallows!" Wolsey exclaims, when he had tasted the bitterness of disgrace, —

"Farewell! a long farewell to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him.
The third day comes a frost — a killing frost;
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely,
His greatness is a ripening — nips his root;
And then he falls — as I do."

When Damocles, a flatterer of Dionysius the tyrant of Sicily, had extolled the happiness of monarchs, the king ordered him to be arrayed as a sovereign, to be attended with royal state, and fed with dainties ; but he caused a naked sword, with the point downwards, to be suspended over his head by a single thread, as an illustration of the uncertain and uneasy tenure of worldly honour and power. The canopy of state covers a multitude of anxieties. Alphonso V., king of Aragon, used to say, " I wish that all my subjects had been sovereigns for a few days, they would then be acquainted with some of the inconveniences and embarrassments of royalty." Hiero, king of Syracuse, complained that he could not do as other men, on account of his rank ; but he was a prisoner among free men. When Charles I. was on a visit at the country-seat of Mr. Shute, an eminent merchant, he said to him, with a sigh, — " How much happier may you be in this sweet retirement, undisturbed by anxieties, than I can be, with all the splendour and honour of a crown !" Rachis, king of the Lombards in the eighth century, reigned only five years, and then became so sick of the cares of government, that he resigned his sceptre, and retired to a monastery. Ambition not only introduces persons to situations which are unfavourable to human happiness, but in the clashing of interests, the striving after power and dominion, disputes are generated among nations which occasion war.

Although ambition is objectionable in most cases, yet it is sometimes attended with advantage ; and

pride is so closely united with a prudent maintenance of reputation, that the one is frequently confounded with the other. Selden has committed an error of this sort. "Pride," he observes, "may be allowed in this or that degree. In gluttony there is eating, in drunkenness drinking; but it is not the eating or the drinking that is to be blamed, but the excess: so is pride." But as gluttony and drunkenness are always understood in a bad sense, so pride and ambition should generally be used in the same way. There may be a moderate inclination to increase our comforts, and benefit society, without ambition; and there may be dignity without pride. Whenever a man anxiously endeavours to raise himself, or to keep himself, above what fairly belongs to him, that is pride; but when a person usually keeps himself in that gradation to which he belongs, and is careful to maintain a good name, he is not culpable. The one endeavours to make the world think better of him than the reality; the other only prevents his fellow men from thinking worse. This may be taken as the general rule: but a man has a right to humble himself as much as he pleases, provided no actual harm be occasioned.

Sometimes there is a pride of science; but this should be checked. Men almost fancy themselves gods, because their predecessors have accumulated knowledge, and left it as a heritage to them. The boasted discoveries of Europeans have been in many instances anticipated, even by Asiatics. The latter, at an early period, understood the true revolutions of the planetary bodies, the art of

printing, of rhetoric, of building, and of legislation; the method of making gunpowder and glass. Some of the proudest triumphs of the sciences and the arts have been the discovery of chance. Music was taught to man by the reeds of the Nile. Painting was introduced by the accidental humour of a female, who traced the shadow of her lover on the sand. The invention of letters seems to have been accidental. Gravitation was illustrated by the falling of an apple. The theory of light and colours was obtained from floating bubbles. The telescope was the discovery of children. Scientific pride is, therefore, in many respects absurd. "Our knowledge," as Plato says, "is mere remembrance." Our acquaintance with the mysteries of nature has depended rather on chance than research.

A scanty supply of information produces conceit. "The vacant skull of a pedant," observes Shenstone, "furnishes out a throne and temple for vanity." A conceited notion of merit has, on some occasions, produced a feeling of self-satisfaction and complacency amidst the war of criticism and the wreck of fame. Dr. Johnson observes of Sir Richard Blackmore, "The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether serious or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself; they neither awed him to silence nor to caution; they neither provoked him to petulance, nor depressed him to complaint." On the other hand, Congreve exhibited conceit by forsaking literary pursuits. After he had obtained some celebrity as a poet, he affected to despise it, and to care only about assuming an extra degree of gen-

tility. This conduct offended Voltaire, who told him, that if he had been nothing more than a gentleman, he would not have called on him. In religion, a man is influenced by pride, who, like the Pharisee, performs his duty to be seen of men, who professes piety, builds temples, and makes great sacrifices, for the purpose of obtaining fame, forgetting the moral of Pope's maxim,—

“ Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name.”

There is also a foolish pride, which seems to imagine the Deity under an obligation to us for our puny and almost worthless actions; as if we could give to God any thing which we had not received from him! and as if we could at any time deem ourselves faultless in the performance of his laws! Pride congratulates itself on meriting heaven; but humility deems itself unworthy of any favour, as incapable of performing a perfectly good action, of doing any thing which could benefit the Deity; and all its hopes of present good, and of future felicity, are founded on the kindness and benevolence of the Almighty, manifested to men through the Mediator for the sins of the world.

Pride is sometimes evinced in an anxiety about a costly and magnificent funeral; and also with regard to the good opinion of our fellow creatures after our death, that our names may be enrolled among heroes, legislators, and other illustrious personages. By an association of feelings, we seem to fancy that we shall be conscious of posthumous honour; but this opinion may be quite

unfounded. We shall probably know nothing of what will occur in the world after we have left it; and the lustre of our fame may go out when we die. The world will have enough to do and think about, after we are gone, without referring to us. We may resemble the cloud which is dissipated, and leaves no trace of its form, —

“ Like dew-drops exhaled as they glisten ;
Like perfume which dies soon as shed ;
Like melody, hush'd while we listen ;
Is memory's dream of the dead.”

BERNARD BARTON.

With regard to pompous funerals, Anaxagoras desired, when he was dying, that his friend would allow no splendid pageantry to accompany his body to the grave, but that they would merely give his scholars a play-day.

A person may innocently feel a little satisfaction in wealth ; and he may, consistently with this feeling, be grateful to the Supreme Being, who supplies him with all his blessings. A man may feel a moderate gratification in the possession of power, and he may use it for the benefit of the virtuous and the discountenance of the vicious. He may be pleased with literary honours, and yet he may not be greatly elated by them. A little influence of emulation and fame seems to be necessary to carry a man onward in the paths of learning : the journey is toilsome ; he must therefore calculate on the influence he may possess, the good he may accomplish, and the esteem he may receive. Henry IV. of France chose for his motto, “ *In via virtuti nulla est via.* ” — “ Virtue pursues each honest

path to fame." And Lord Bacon observes, "In fame of learning, the flight will be slow without some feathers of ostentation." Pindar, Hesiod, Plautus, Horace, Socrates, Seneca, Lucretius, Lucan, Martial, Galen, and Cicero, were ostentatious and ambitious. The last, when he obtained the object of his wishes — the consulship — exclaimed in the fulness of his joy, "O fortunatam natam, me consule Romam!" Without doubt, many of these eminent persons were too much moved by the love of honour; but it enabled them to do what the world, even in the present day, admire.

Pride, then, consists of, or produces, an excess of ostentation, unreasonable ambition, arrogance, contemptuousness, insolence, revenge, haughtiness, and gloom. It displeases others, and makes the possessor unhappy. It unfits a person for the consistent and praiseworthy performance of his duty, and lessens the amount of his earthly happiness. Humility produces cheerfulness, kindness, and forgiveness; it improves the health, cheers the heart, and gladdens the countenance. The humble person is sometimes hid from the observation of men, but he is especially regarded by the approval of the Most High; the influence of Divine favour rests upon him; he possesses a permanence of enjoyment; for, as Patrick elegantly says, "Though the dews of Divine grace fall every where, yet they lie longest in the shade." Pride is intended to increase dignity, but it occasions mortification and degradation: humility apparently depresses, but it greatly elevates and ennobles the possessor.

CHAP. XIV.

ON MODESTY AND BOLDNESS.

MODESTY is timidity; but timidity operates in two ways: when it prevents a person from violating the dictates of reason and virtue, it may be termed modesty; but when it arises from a disordered body, with weakened nerves and a gloomy mind, it constitutes weakness and bashfulness. **Boldness** is firmness; but firmness may exist in a good cause or a bad one. When boldness enables a person to perform his duty,—being unchecked by fear or notions of difficulty,—it is fortitude; but when it arises from strong nerves, with an uncultivated mind,—when it operates without delicacy, and without the influence of reason and virtue,—it is assurance or impudence. Modesty, then, may be used in a good sense, and boldness in a bad one.

When the nervous system is vigorous, a person will probably become bold and indecorous, except he be regulated by education; and when it is weak, he will become bashful and diffident, except he be stimulated by the force of reason, and improved by an intercourse with society. Modesty is shown in children, when they are orderly in company; but if they be timid, dull, and incapable of conversing when they are requested to do so, they are bashful: if they be formal, talkative, and unruly, they are

bold. The future conduct depends in a great measure on the training in childhood: the two extremes, therefore, should be checked, and as much freedom as may be consistent with propriety should be allowed.

Modesty is one of the most lovely ornaments of a female. It is more attractive than the most costly jewels or the most splendid apparel; but it must not be confounded with affectation and prudery. The affectedly modest thinks she cannot go too far; and thus she pretends to be disgusted with what would not affect another. The reason is, she attaches immodest thoughts to many actions and words, which another with a purer heart would never think of. Lucretia was not abashed at what would have occasioned fainting in many a prude. Another reason is, she has, perhaps, a character to gain: and thus she makes up in language what she is deficient of in conduct. Sometimes a scrupulosity in words, with an unusual delicacy and liability to take offence, is intended to compensate, in the reckoning of conscience, for a violation of those engagements which connect male and female in "holy matrimony." On the other hand, boldness and impudence in conduct and in language are the sign of a depraved heart and of loose morals.

Modesty is amiable; an endeavour to exhibit it is, therefore, a tribute to its merit: but boldness and indelicacy are unamiable; consequently, an affectation of either is discreditable. Some people overstep the boundary of propriety with regard to speech; they fancy that there is nothing in words,

and that one word may be used as well as another : but language in some cases is vulgar, owing to its origin ; and in others, owing to its corruption ; while in others it becomes objectionable, because it is introduced for the sake of expressing, indirectly or ambiguously, what delicacy would not allow in plainer words, but the ignorant and the indelicate appropriate it for their own purpose, and then the more polished must seek for new phraseology. The modest person will choose what is universally acknowledged to be consistent with delicacy. Nothing occasions an opinion of vulgarity and almost brutishness, with regard to a female, more certainly than the using of coarse and indelicate speech. Greater care is necessary in the company of strangers, than in the presence of those with whom we are familiar, and who, knowing the innocence of our intention, will not interpret our language improperly. And sometimes, for the sake of humour, a more vulgar (though not disgusting) language may be used, when the intention is not bad, and the effect will not be injurious.

Customs vary exceedingly in different countries with regard to dress and general conduct. The Oriental ladies deem it disgraceful to exhibit any part of their person ; whereas the Roman ladies were scantily covered. It is, however, in the present day, in this country, rather indelicate for a female to wear an exceedingly low dress ; and it is, in most cases, repulsive rather than attractive. If all the charms of the softer and more lovely sex were exhibited, the imagination would have nothing whereon to operate. This faculty paints most vi-

vidly what is most hidden. A certain coyness of manners, arising from unaffected modesty, is exceedingly pleasing. Blair poetically describes the native timidity of the country maid,—

“ Whose lonely unappropriated sweets
Smile like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,
Not to be come at by the willing hand.”

But it must not go to an extreme—to an unnatural or affected repulsiveness,—otherwise it will seem to arise from hatred or ignorance, and then it will occasion disgust. In Europe, the ceremony of marriage is free, open, and natural; but, in some countries, the method of choosing a wife, and the forms of matrimony, are altogether contrary to our notions of delicacy.

In Arabia, and in some other parts of the East, it is deemed inconsistent with modesty for a lady to unveil more than one of her eyes; and hence, in the Canticles, it is said, “Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.” In some countries it has been deemed indelicate for the wife to eat in the company of her husband; to exhibit herself even to her relatives; with a thousand other foolish notions, some of which belong to barbarous and others to civilised nations.

Modesty in a man is exhibited, when appropriate language and consistent actions spring from a heart which intends no evil. But when a person is timid—not only of evil, but good—and fears to say or do what is appropriate, and what he would wish to perform, then it is bashfulness: and as boldness will bring forward what is offensive, so

timidity will keep back what is pleasing; and as a disordered nervous system will influence the mind, and cause it to behold fear where no fear is, so improper example, or injurious reading, will influence and disorder the nervous system. And the more backward a man has been of exhibiting his abilities, the more timid he will feel: for his diffidence may have occasioned a high opinion of his ability, and thus he will be anxious that those who listen to him may not be disappointed; or it may have produced a notion that he is almost incapable of any thing, and thus he will be timid of exhibiting his abilities lest he should fail. But a man should break down these foolish barriers, and risk a failure or two for the purpose of practising himself and obtaining eminence. A little boldness is particularly necessary for public men. Hortensius and Cicero would never have shone in the Forum if they had been afraid to exhibit a twinkling light; and Demosthenes would not have moved the hearts of thousands, if he had feared to make a beginning. Ulysses is said to have been timid as an orator; but this was considered, at that time, as an ornament rather than a defect. A bold and self-confident demeanour implies that the speaker thinks he knows more than his auditory; but a modest deportment intimates that the orator pays a proper deference to the collected wisdom of his hearers. Boldness and ignorance, as well as knowledge and modesty, seem to be natural associates. It is rather singular, that he who knows but little should be so well satisfied with it, and that he who is deeply read should be so diffident of his acquire-

ments : but one reason is, that laborious study, if it is ill conducted, disorders the health, and weakens the nervous system, so that, although the mind may be capable, the body will be feeble; whereas the person who thinks but little may have an abundance of animal vigour. Another reason is, that the learned man compares his acquisitions with the amount of what may be known; he keeps within his mental view the most eminent men of ancient and of modern days; and thus he sometimes becomes dispirited : but the ignorant person dreams not, in his philosophy, of such exalted matters; he looks at what he was, and what he is; and this, he fancies, constitutes the whole progress of human improvement. The fool necessarily acts foolishly; but the wise man, in this case, does not act wisely; for he desires to be every thing that all other men have been, — consequently he will not succeed. If he cannot perform what he would wish, let him do what he can. Theocritus, perhaps, did not act wisely, when, being requested to write a certain thing, he replied, “Because I cannot do it as I would, I will not do it at all.”

Some men are timid in company; and chiefly for this reason, they have led a retired life; and, being enamoured of the charms of solitude, they find nothing in gay society which cheers and exhilarates them; consequently, they endure it, rather than delight in it. Men are pleased by contrast; and whatever gratifies us will soon become familiar. If a person be dissatisfied in company, he will betake himself to solitude; and a life of retirement will soon become agreeable. If

he be displeased with solitude, he will betake himself to society; and in proportion as he disliked the one he will love the other; and, in the same degree as he loves it, he will acquire the art of pleasing and being pleased. Whatever we practise most, with care, will become most easy; and thus the horseman manages his steed without labour; the charioteer drives his vehicle with perfect ease; the helmsman steers his vessel without difficulty; the orator addresses his auditory with perfect confidence; and the footman acquires an ease of deportment, which the gentleman accustomed to solitude could never possess. A bashful person, however, will be much more pleasing than a formal and impertinent man. The one will be amiable and worthy, the other will be worthless. The one is deemed better than he appears, and the other worse than he pretends. Dr. Beattie observes of timid persons — “If they are attentive and respectful to their company, bashfulness will not injure them in the opinion of the discerning; it will rather raise prepossessions in their favour.” The timid person is an enemy to himself; the formal and offensive is a foe to himself and to others.

Some men are exceedingly susceptible of the rude blast of censure. M. de Voyer was harshly rebuked by Louis XVI., and he died of chagrin. Others are excessively timid of a diminution of fame: like the horns of a snail, on the least movement, they draw themselves back; and thus they are prevented from doing any thing, or, if they muster resolution enough to labour in the

vineyard of science or literature, they are distressed and disheartened by every kind of opposition. It is said of Diodorus the logician, that he died of shame, because he was unable to answer an intricate question, which was proposed to him in his school by Stilpo. And Plato, it is said, was sadly puzzled and distressed by some difficult propositions, which were given him for his solution by his old scholar Aristotle. The brawniness which Locke recommends, and to which I have already alluded, is quite essential to counteract this injurious sensibility. Sometimes there is a feeling remembrance of past adventures, which may be moderately indulged. It may serve to tranquillise the mind, to excite gratitude to the Supreme Governor, and to occasion a pleasing satisfaction with ourselves. The soldier, in Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," —

" Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away ;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done ;
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won."

Some persons are so much affected by what they see and hear, that they can never conceal their emotions. If any thing novel or unpleasant be intimated, they blush ; if any thing ludicrous, or approaching towards it, they laugh ; if sorrowful, they weep ; if unfair, they are excited by anger ; if attractive, by love ; if repulsive, by hatred. But, in these cases, the feeling is frequently premature, and very inappropriate. Such people are influenced by the first appearance ; they are like a feather carried by every breeze : it is very pro-

bable, therefore, that an excess of sensibility will diminish earthly happiness.

Blushing is indicative of virtue rather than vice. Dr. Beattie terms it "a very amiable affection, and particularly becoming in young people." The modest and lovely appearance of a maiden in disguise is delightfully sketched in the "Hermit" of Goldsmith : —

" ' For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex,' he said ;
But while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray'd.

Surprised he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view ;
Like colours o'er the morning skies,
As bright as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms ;
The lovely stranger stands confess'd
A maid in all her charms."

When Icarius had endeavoured to persuade his son-in-law Ulysses to continue in Sparta, but could not succeed, he tried to influence his daughter Penelope to remain with him, but failed ; and Ulysses, with his beautiful consort, fled in his chariot. Icarius overtook him : and then Ulysses, being weary of so much importunity, declared to Penelope, that if she would accompany him he should be exceedingly glad ; but if not, she might return. Icarius hoped that his daughter would go back ; but, when he again pressed her, she blushed deeply, and drew her veil over her face

without speaking. Icarus, perceiving that she was desirous of accompanying her husband, and being charmed with her manner, gratified her wish, and erected on that spot a statue of Modesty.

Blushing arises from agitation ; consequently, an anxious endeavour to prevent or check it increases its influence. Indifference, and a boldness produced by habit, counteract it ; and thus persons who mix much with society are less subject to it, and so are those who are naturally destitute of sensibility, and others who have destroyed their finer feelings by the practice of immorality.

There are some persons who are almost unsusceptible and invariable. This will sometimes arise from an uniform attention to justice and the dictates of reason, regardless of other considerations. It may be appropriate for those who fill judicial situations, and indeed it is almost necessary, otherwise the gay blandishments of beauty, or the tears and sorrows of a fascinating woman, or the arts which a designing female might easily practise, would act as a spell on the judge ; and thus vice would triumph, while innocence would suffer. John Knox appeared to have been regulated only by the stern principles of duty in his conferences with the beautiful but unfortunate Mary of Scotland : neither her youth nor her winning manners affected him ; he disputed and reasoned with her as if she were destitute of charms ; and whether she wept or spoke angrily, it made little difference. But Mary afterwards exhibited a little revenge. On the trial of Knox (as Dr. M'Cree relates), she burst into laughter, and said, " That man has

made me weep, and never shed a tear himself; and now I will try if I can make him weep." Sometimes indifference arises from stupidity. Some men are reckoned good-tempered, because they can listen to reproach without feeling, and without possessing any desire of improving their conduct; but there is a great difference between unconsciousness and firmness.

There is a natural vulgarity in some persons. They do and say every thing coarsely and rudely. If they speak, they halloo; if they have a communication for one or two, they lift up their voice as if all the world must hear, not considering that what may be appropriate for the person for whom it is intended may appear ludicrous to others. In love, in science, and in religion, they act in the same manner. Their business becomes the business of every one, to the no small mortification of the persons with whom they are more immediately connected. Their opinion, however inappropriate and vulgar, must be introduced at any time and on any occasion.

A boasting disposition is usually the result of boldness, conceit, and indelicacy. It generally implies an absence or a scantiness of the very excellencies in which it glories. It is, in fact, a species of hypocrisy. A boasting man in the way of knowledge is seldom learned; in the way of wealth, is seldom prosperous; in virtue, is seldom a man of integrity; and in religion, is usually a deceiver.

CHAP. XV.

ON RETIREMENT AND A PUBLIC LIFE.

It will be necessary to remember, in the investigation of this subject, that no two conditions of human life are exactly alike, and equally productive of happiness; the degrees of enjoyment may vary from one to one million, and although two cases may appear to agree, yet they are only somewhat similar: consequently, retirement or a public life must be more productive of happiness; or the one may be adapted for one person, and the other for another. It must be remembered also, that we cannot form a just estimate of the enjoyments of either by the prejudices of those who have not experienced its influence. A person who is engaged in the bustle of life has read of the pleasures of retirement — of rural scenery, and of country innocence; but, when he endeavours to prove these charms, he finds that he has no taste for them. His imagination had painted the delights of solitude too brilliantly, and now he is disappointed. Like Cowley, perhaps, he may have dreamt of felicity in a farm; but his agricultural pursuits give him a cold, and terminate his days. It is the same with the native of the country, when he represents in his wandering fancy the pleasures of society — the gaiety, the amusements, the luxury,

the riches, the honours, of worldly men ; these enchanting objects dance before him, and perplex his mental vision : he leaves his rural home, he mixes with the giddy dissipation of the city, and sinks into the whirlpool of misery. These disappointments arise from an erroneous notion, that happiness, pure and unalloyed, may be found somewhere, and that it depends principally on rank or condition.

If a man forsakes society because he hates it, because he is gloomy and misanthropical, he will not be happy any where. A disposition of this kind is a bad one. If he has begun to hate others, he will soon begin to hate himself; and this is reasonable; for if he dislikes the world for being imperfect, he should dislike himself for partaking of the same character. But if duty and engagement call him from the busy world, if the beauties of nature attract him, let him moderately cherish the inclination, for it will not diminish his enjoyment. As a general rule, we are called into the active enjoyments of the world. Man is a social being; his faculties are adapted for society. Love, gratitude, kindness, benevolence, and all the most amiable virtues, are struck off like brilliant sparks by contact. Friendship cannot bloom in a desert, but only in a garden.

“ Man, like the generous vine, supported lives;
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.”

Society produces civilisation, the cultivation and practice of virtue, the culture of the arts and the sciences. Solitariness, if it were general, would

chain down the human species to ignorance and brutality. As metals become smooth by friction, so men become polished by an intercourse with each other. Much retirement unfits a man for society, and, consequently, the gaiety or the activity of the world will not prove a pleasing relaxation; but if his principal engagements be in society, and his mind be properly cultivated, retirement will always prove a grateful source of recreation. The natural course is, therefore, pointed out. Society is the proper sphere for a person's usual engagements; retirement is an occasional retreat for repose and relaxation.

The greater apparent good should invariably regulate our conduct. There are some engagements which require so much attention, that a man has need to leave society that he may give them his undivided time. These may arise from the pursuit of learning and the arts, or the attainment of piety. The lawfulness of the latter has been deemed questionable. Some have imagined that the welfare of one man, in a religious sense, is dependent on his fellow men; but this is degrading to the character of the Deity: others have supposed that one person is not at all dependent on another; but this harmonises not with the system of human affairs. In all that relates to our everlasting welfare, we are certainly dependent on the Almighty and ourselves; but in many things that regard temporal enjoyment we are dependent on each other. Man has, therefore, a duty to perform, which, in most cases, would keep him in society. But in times of trouble, when the influence of a

few persons would be useless, and their own lives would be endangered, they may, like the early Christians, go into the woods or the deserts. Or, if the influences of philanthropy were sufficiently powerful, and men were supplied with all the comforts which they needed, then might many go into retirement; but this period is not arrived. Or, if a person possessed a powerful inclination to spend his days in pious contemplation, and he believed that the Almighty countenanced his purpose, he might leave the noisy haunts of men. Or, if he found that he could not by any means mix with society, without contaminating himself and falling into evil, he might then be justified in choosing solitude. The most pious men in every age, and especially in troublous times, have retreated from the world. Isaac Ambrose, an eminent nonconformist, used to retire for a month, in every year, to a little hut in a wood, where he shut himself up from every human being, and spent his time in deep and pious contemplation. Gregory Nazianzen lived in solitude, among groves, and fountains, and natural gardens, where he studied religion and the sciences. Thomas à Kempis shut himself up in his convent, and spent his time between the enjoyments of the altar and the study. Massillon lived as a recluse; but he came forth occasionally to instruct the world, and then he shone as a comet which had just left the solar fire.

A body of men, influenced by a feeling of piety towards God, and a desire of keeping themselves unspotted from the world, may associate together and form a community. In this case, they can

impart and receive benefits; and it makes no difference with regard to the practice of virtue, whether it be termed a town, a village, or a monastery. The only variation is, that, in communities of Christian men, marriage is prohibited; but marriage is not a necessary part of virtue. There seems to be, in some cases, a licence for a solitary life; and, in many instances, a body of persons may live together without impropriety, and with much advantage. If it were possible for every man to remain alone, the human race would be degraded; if all men lived in cities, they would probably become corrupted; but if they live in communities—either as the early Christians, among whom marriage was allowed, or as the monks of later times, among whom marriage is prohibited—the human character may be greatly improved and polished. The inmates of the Port-Royal Academy were some of the most eminent and faultless men which ever existed. Besides, these monasteries were sometimes situated in parts of the world which were thinly populated, and there they served as a resting-place for the traveller. Every one was received with true affection and hospitality. On deserts, in forests, in dreary valleys, on the snow-covered mountain, the cheerful spire of the monastery reared its head. The coasts of the Red Sea; the shores of the Mediterranean; the banks of the Tigris, the Jordan, and the Euphrates; the islands of the *Ægean* Sea; the country in the vicinity of the Nile, among roaring cataracts; the mountains of Lebanon, the Alps, and the Pyrenees; the plains of Egypt, and the vales of Palestine;—these were

thickly inhabited by monks. The observations which have been made with regard to monasteries, will apply to nunneries. In many cases, abuses sprang up, and these became general; but the origin of these religious houses, and the principle on which they were founded, appear to have been good.

Literary and scientific pursuits will sometimes compel a person to leave the society of men. By so doing, he may occasion an injury; but it will probably be accompanied by a greater good. How much may a man perform, who instructs his fellow men; who gives them rules for conduct, which may influence the lives of thousands! And thus the advantage, which was lost to the world by the occasional solitude of Bishop Taylor, was more than compensated by the benefit arising from his valuable writings. Des Cartes shut himself up in retirement, and gave to the world a new system of philosophy. Montesquieu retired to the country, where he saw nothing but books, and trees, and rural scenery; and there he composed his "Considerations of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Solitude is exceedingly favourable for a literary man.

—With streams, and shades,
And airy songs, the enchanted landscape smiles,
Cheers his long labours, and renews his frame.

AKENSIDE.

Bishop Watson says, — "I have now spent above twenty years in this delightful country (Winandermere); but my time has not been spent in field diversions, in idle visitings, in county bickerings, in indolence or intemperance: no; it has been

spent, partly in supporting the religion and constitution of the country by seasonable publications; and principally in building farm-houses, blasting rocks, enclosing wastes, in making bad land good, in planting larches, and in planting in the hearts of my children principles of piety, of benevolence, and of self-government." Sir Isaac Newton spent much of his time in a state of seclusion from the world; but he spent it happily and profitably. The pursuer of science and learning will possess a never-failing source of employment; consequently, his time in solitude will not pass heavily. "They that are learned," observes Jeremy Taylor, "know the worth of time, and the manner of improving a day." Pope, in one of his earliest productions, described the occasional labour and relaxation of a literary man in retirement: —

" Sound sleep by night ; study and ease,
 Together mix'd ; sweet recreation,
 And innocence, which most does please
 With meditation."

Scipio declared that solitude had no loneliness for him. Demosthenes, Cicero, Seneca, and Bacon were all exalted by learning and honours; but they sunk in the vortex of popularity: in solitude, however, they applied themselves to literature, and brought forth some of their most estimable works. Thus, while a cloud rested on them, they were increasing their lustre, to shine forth the more brilliantly. Mankind has, perhaps, been benefited more by the fall and retirement of these eminent men, than by their exaltation. "If you covet

learning," says Pope, "you must have leisure and a retired life." Zeno, the great teacher of the Stoic doctrine, lost all his property by shipwreck; and then he retired from the world and studied philosophy, and thanked the gods for his misfortune.

There is much virtue sometimes, as well as happiness, in retirement. "God made the country," says Cowper, "but man made the town."—"Solitudinem," observes Seneca, "*quærit, qui vult cum innocentibus vivere.*"—"He delights in solitude, who wishes to live virtuously." How delightfully does Gray describe the tranquil inhabitants of rural scenes!

"Far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They keep the noiseless tenour of their way."

In the country there is generally much to attract the lover of nature. The peaceful vale, the murmuring rivulet, the deep and tranquil stream, the grove-covered hill, shady bowers, variegated groves, the hoary rock with its crumbling castle, the overhanging precipice, the lonely cell, the deep reverberating cavern, the stately tenants of the forest; the verdant meadow, bordered with primroses and the sweet blossom of the hawthorn; valleys enamelled with flowers, the rushing of cascades, the warbling of the lark, the songs of the thrush, the melody of the nightingale, the brilliant plumage of birds, the painted butterfly, the beauties of the heavens, the tranquil grey of the morning, the

silent charms of the evening ; the canopy of night, studded with brilliant gems ; the sky variegated by clouds, and adorned by the rainbow ; the brilliant moon ; the fragrance of gardens and hay-fields ; — these are the delightful portion of the country resident, and these exhilarate and enchant the virtuous and cultivated mind. A love of rural beauty and retirement, observes Ely Bates, “ is so congenial with the human mind, that we cannot wonder to find it cherished among all the hurry and dissipation of public life ; especially if we consider that such a life is often attended with labour and sorrow, with weariness and disappointment.” From a feeling of this kind, Cardinal Dubois exclaimed, in the midst of his splendour as minister of France, — “ Alas ! how happy should I be, if I were replaced in my old situation, with 150*l.* a year.” And Goldsmith, after alluding to some of the beauties of rural life in the *Deserted Village*, says, —

“ How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease.”

It has been observed by Bayle, that nothing is more extraordinary than for a great man to know where to stop in the acquirement of honours. It is rare for him to forsake the bustle of life, and to retreat into a comfortable retirement, where he may enjoy his high character. One reason is, that men seldom think about the flight of time, the approach of old age and death, when they are surrounded by the splendours of this world. But in some cases they have shown their wisdom in

leaving their active pursuits before their faculties have left them. Charles V. resigned the throne to his son, and enjoyed the delight of solitude. Similis, who served with much honour as a captain under Trajan and Adrian, having obtained leave to retire, resided seven years in solitude, and then he caused to be engraved on his tomb, that he had lived only seven years. Gallio, a Roman senator, was banished to Lesbos by Tiberius; but the Roman lived so happily in exile, that he was brought back, and confined in his house, that his punishment might be greater. Metellus, when he was in banishment, exclaimed, "I am driven from my country, in opposition to every law of justice and honesty; but I want neither fire nor water, and I enjoy the highest felicity."

Society is not always pleasing; every man is not a friend. A person may be solitary among thousands; for, as Lord Bacon observes, — "A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures." This is one reason why many men gladly leave the pomp, selfishness, and disquiet of the world, to associate with the inanimate works of the Creator. When Grotius resided at Paris, as ambassador from Sweden, he wrote to one of his friends, — "I am quite tired out with honours; a private and a quiet life alone has charms for me." Dr. Johnson observes of Swift, "It is easy to perceive, that although ambition pressed Swift into a life of bustle, the wish for a life of ease was always returning." The Dean says of himself, —

"Thus in a sea of folly tost,
My choicest hours of life are lost;

Yet always wishing to retreat,
 Oh, could I see my country seat !
 There, leaning near a gentle brook,
 Sleep, or peruse some ancient book ;
 And there in sweet oblivion drown
 Those cares that haunt the court and town."

Walter Landor, in his *Imaginary Conversations*, observes, "How many, who have abandoned for public life the studies of philosophy and poetry, may be compared to brooks and rivers, which, in the beginning of their course, have assuaged our thirst, and have invited us to tranquillity by their bright resemblance of it, and which afterwards partake the nature of that vast body into which they run, its dreariness, its bitterness, its foams, its storms, its everlasting noise and commotion."

A sudden change in the evening of life is not always calculated to increase enjoyment; indeed it may be productive of dissatisfaction and gloom. Knowledge and prudence are necessary to guide our decisions with regard to future engagements. The influence of habit, of disposition, and of constitution, must be reckoned, before a change of life can be judiciously adopted, otherwise the bark of earthly happiness will probably founder. If a man has been engaged in active pursuits, and he has no resource in retirement, which could occupy his mind and exercise his bodily powers, he will become miserable. Cowper says, —

" 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
 But not to manage leisure with a grace :
 Absence of occupation is not rest ;
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distress."

A person should be more adapted by his taste and general qualities for that to which he removes than for that which he leaves. But it will be said by persons who are making an erroneous calculation, that they have tried retirement, relaxation, and ease, and they find them exceedingly pleasant. This is true; for rest is the proper kind of enjoyment after labour, in the same way as feasting is delightful after fasting; but as continual eating would be injurious, so continual rest will not contribute to happiness. And because a particular engagement may be pleasant as a relaxation, it does not follow that it would be advantageous as a regular pursuit. Constant employment is necessary for the mind and the body, consequently that person errs greatly who thinks he may enjoy himself in solitude, without the capability and the inclination of employing himself industriously. As stagnancy produces putridity in water, so inactivity in man occasions sickness and melancholy. Cowper thus addresses solitude: —

“ Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,
Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and choose thee for their own.”

Females are not so much subject to changes as males; for whether a man be a merchant or engaged in a profession, whether he be employed in the more active engagements of the world, or in enjoying the fruit of his labours, the affairs of the house equally devolve on the wife; but a man frequently removes from activity to indolence, from a bustle to dulness.

Ministers of state have seldom lived long after

they have left their office ; but generals, and eminent officers in the navy, have lived to a good old age. The reason is, the former have been usually removed without their consent, and this preys on their mind. They are like the seaman who has been tossed on the boisterous ocean, and then thrown almost friendless on the shore. A thousand unpleasant matters are continually introduced, relating to their errors and misconduct, and thus they are mortified, and die of chagrin. On the other hand, the warrior has generally performed some glorious feat, and he has resigned his post with honour. He has been accustomed to difficulties, to hard marching, scanty fare, and inclement weather ; consequently present enjoyments appear the greater. Danger blunts the feelings, and hence he is not susceptible of trifling causes of uneasiness. Armies and navies, the intelligence of campaigns and expeditions, with conversation, reading, and walking, engage his time and produce amusement. He can give an interesting account of marches, routes, attacks, retreats, battles, and victories. He possesses an inexhaustible store of amusement for himself and for others. He feels little envy or jealousy. Whoever may be monarch or minister, his pay is certain, and his merit is respected. He has little to annoy him, much to please him,—and tranquillity of mind lengthens his days.

If a person leave the great ocean of life for a comfortable and secure harbour, where he may pleasantly sail about without being exposed to the dangers of the sea : if the sun shine calmly on

him, and the surface of the water be tolerably smooth ; if the blessings of Providence be showered upon him, and no enemy intrude ; if his exertions be not so great as to oppress his body or his mind, and yet enough to give it proper action, — then he may spend the evening of his days pleasantly, but otherwise he may calculate only on unhappiness.

In the bustle of the world there are many disquietudes and many vices : the passions are excited, and the conduct becomes unreasonable and unjust ; a person has need, therefore, to go into retirement occasionally for the purpose of checking these evils, for reviewing his conduct, and for laying down principles of future guidance. The immoral man dislikes solitude,—he fears the company of his own thoughts. Thomson exclaims, —

“ Hail, mildly pleasing solitude,
Companion of the wise and good ;
But from whose holy, piercing eye,
The herd of fools and villains fly.”

The melancholy man should not indulge an inclination for seclusion : the society of man is the best check for his malady.

There is a great variety of rural sights and sounds in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* : the following description of a summer evening in the country is exceedingly pleasing :—

“ Sweet was the sound, when, oft at evening's close,
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below ;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung ;
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young ;

The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool ;
The playful children just let loose from school ;
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ; —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made."

The engagements of public life may generally be considered as our duty. Retirement is usually allowable only as a relaxation ; but there are some important exceptions to this general rule. He that leaves the busy walks of life for the service of the Creator, or the culture of science, and the general benefit of mankind, is not to be condemned. He that enters the realms of solitude for the purpose of idleness, will find them the regions of dulness ; he that does so for the purpose of labour, will find them productive of profit and enjoyment.

CHAP. XVI.

ON GRATITUDE AND INGRATITUDE.

GRATITUDE is a feeling of thankfulness on the receipt of a benefit, with a desire of imparting favours in return. Among human beings, there are the rich and the poor; the powerful and the weak; the learned and the ignorant; consequently, favours may be continually communicated from one to another. In many instances, a benefit may be met by an equivalent; and this occurs in the transactions of commerce: in other instances, the receiver cannot immediately give a compensation. When a man possesses more of any particular kind of worldly good than he requires for his own comfort, he is bound by the laws of philanthropy to impart of his abundance to the deserving and needy. Or, if he has only as much as may be necessary, and yet disposes of a part to his destitute fellow-creatures, he is worthy of esteem. And if he possesses information which may be valuable to mankind, he is bound by every principle of benevolence to communicate it, as far as may be possible. On the other hand, the receiver, when he cannot immediately give a compensation, is compelled in honour to make a return when he can. If the gift be money, he is not bound to repay it in the same way; or if it be important advice, he is

not obliged to give the same — for he may not be able; but he will cherish a feeling of esteem and regard for the person by whom he has been benefited; and if no opportunity should occur for making a return in actual favours, yet he would be ready to gratify that disposition if an occasion should offer.

The rich man should not exercise benevolence, because it may produce gratitude, but because it is his duty to God and his neighbour; and the poor should not evince gratitude in order to obtain additional favours, but they should cherish it as a noble feeling, which adorns the possessor, as much as it honours the person to whom it is directed. The man who confers a benefit ought not to consider the receiver as under weighty obligations; for if it were done in the expectation of a return, it was not a gift but a transaction of barter; and, consequently, except on any very important occasion, no allusion should be made to favours imparted. On the other hand, the receiver ought not to consider himself as having forfeited his independence by the acceptance of a benefit: he ought to deem himself at liberty to act agreeably with his conscience and reason; but he is bound, as a man of honour, to act in a friendly manner in return. If a favour were imparted without an equivalent, let a favour be returned without an equivalent. And as it is a proof of baseness to reproach another, because he has accepted a gift; so it is an evidence of meanness, if an inadvertent hint be caught at, in order to raise a quarrel, and free one's self from any fancied entanglements of obligation, by the

common method of declaring, "Now that you have alluded to the favour, it is cancelled." These expressions and these feelings arise from a notion, that the conferring of benefits produces a burdensome debt; whereas, it only ought to be considered as a rivalry of honour and virtue — the one imparts favours, and the other endeavours, when he has an opportunity, to act with equal nobleness. But if the latter has no facility for gratifying a disposition of benevolence, through poverty or any other sufficient cause, he is not degraded. If God has not given to a person, the person cannot give. If a man possess great muscular power, and he have an opportunity of greatly benefiting a fellow-creature by the exercise of his strength, and yet he refuse, he will act inhumanly; but if a man be weak and paralysed, he cannot give assistance.

The truly liberal and benevolent person will endeavour to benefit his fellow-creatures from a feeling of generosity and pleasure, without looking for a return; and whether those who are affected by his bounty acknowledge it or not, he is not much distressed, except for the dishonourable conduct of the receivers. He endeavours to please his Maker; and his reward does not depend on his success in receiving praise from men.

We are, or ought to be, continually influenced by grateful feelings; for there is no man so rich and powerful as not to receive favours from his fellow-creatures; and there is none so low and despised, as not to be under obligations to others. All men are bound to be grateful to the Almighty for existence, because life has been a source of

more happiness than misery. This is the general rule; there may be some exceptions; but these will probably arise from folly and wickedness; and in these cases the sufferings of this life may be a punishment for the neglect of duty. We are bound to be grateful to the Almighty for our health. Most men are favoured with a greater number of days of healthfulness than with those of sickness; and even the presence of pain at one time makes the period of ease more delightful. And thus, although the man who suffers disease knows the disadvantage of pain, yet he enjoys intervals of brightness, which receive an additional lustre from a contrast with previous periods. A person should be grateful for the use of his bodily faculties. Some are afflicted by paralysed limbs, by wounds, by imperfect hearing, by blindness; but the number is small; and how are these favoured who have perfect limbs and perfect senses! We should be grateful for the powers of memory, of judgment, and of fancy; whereby knowledge may be retained, important decisions made, and delightful imagery formed. Our food, our raiment, our dwellings, and all our comforts, are calculated to excite and cherish a pleasing feeling of gratitude. If a man be rich, he may be thankful, and he should be desirous of employing his wealth beneficially; if he be powerful and honourable, he may be grateful, and he may endeavour to use his influence discreetly; if he be placed in the middle rank of society, he may be pleased, for he is freed from the anxiety attendant on abundant wealth, and the misery of extreme poverty; and even if

he be situated rather lower, he may be grateful — especially if he be favoured with a healthy body and a sound mind. Such a man may be happier than a noble, and incomparably better than the gouty and invalid person who fares sumptuously every day. “How much better,” observes Dr. Paley, “is activity than attendance; beauty than dress; appetite, digestion, and tranquil bowels, than all the studies of cookery, or the most costly compilation of forced, or far-fetched dainties.” There is not a man who reviews his life, and calculates the blessings which he has enjoyed, if his mind be in a proper state, but will acknowledge that he is greatly indebted to the Almighty Governor of the world. But gratitude, even towards the Deity, if it be accompanied by a servile feeling of obligation, is not agreeable, nor does the Deity require it. We are not obliged to give a certain weight or measure of gloom and uneasiness for every blessing we enjoy. The Almighty Giver does not bestow his favours for a compensation; for how could man repay the Deity? His gifts arise from pure benevolence. All that he requires is a reasonable enjoyment of worldly good; a cheerful and happy disposition, accompanied by a continual remembrance of the fountain whence our comforts flow, with a consistent and pious life. He that forgets God, and attributes his worldly good to his own skill, is both unreasonable and ungrateful.

Man is also continually receiving favours from his fellow-men; and that condition of society would be the most virtuous and happy, where

people thought more about imparting, than gathering and storing up ; where the feeling of selfishness in man was exercised on the noble principle of gaining happiness by reflection from the enjoyment of others. Favours are received by the child from the parent ; and kindness is shown by the son or the daughter to the father or the mother. Good offices are performed among friends. The subject may be grateful to the government, when peace is preserved, and justice is administered. The ruler may honour and esteem the subject, when loyalty and good order are maintained. The religious pastor may be grateful to his flock, when they give him his lawful due without grudging, and when they cherish feelings of peace and good will. The flock may esteem their shepherd, when he performs his duty. The scholar may feel grateful to his instructor, when the latter is kind and patient ; and the teacher may evince his regard to his scholar, when improvement results from diligence. There may be gratitude for kind words, friendly actions, liberal thoughts, and benevolent intentions.

If a man intend to impart a benefit, but fail, the person to whom it would have been communicated may be grateful, inasmuch as the kind intention was a proof of regard ; but if a favour be not intended, but accidentally imparted, a man may be grateful as far as the benefit may deserve. If an injury be purposed, but a favour be granted ; if, for instance, one man be appointed to be executed, and another to be rewarded, through mere caprice, and the names be incorrectly connected with the several decisions, then the survivor who receives the re-

ward is under no obligation of gratitude. In one of the cases to which I have alluded, no evil was intended, but good was received ; and as the benefit will occasion a sensation of pleasure, and that feeling will naturally be connected with the source from which it flowed, we shall think of the giver with gratitude. But in the other case we shall remember the intention to injure when we think of the good received ; and thus the one will counteract the other.

In every instance where an equivalent is given, or engaged to be given, there is no ground of obligation, and no call for gratitude. For instance, in the contract between master and servant, if an engagement be made, and the parties perform their duty, they are equal. But if the master do more than he promised, and more than the services of the other deserve, the balance is in favour of the master. If the servant perform more than he engaged to do, and more than a conscientious person would be bound to perform, then the balance is in favour of the servant.

In some cases, whatever may have been the previous inequality, it is consistent with reason and with human happiness to introduce an equality. And this remark will apply to matrimony. A female should never connect herself with one who is much inferior to her condition ; or if she do, she should step into her proper place, agreeably with the vows which she made at the altar. Notions of obligation and gratitude are inconsistent with the feelings which ought to exist between husband and wife. In this condition, there should be more anxiety to

minister to each other other's enjoyment than to be ministered to. Unhappiness cannot be produced by an endeavour to excite pleasure in another; but it may be occasioned by an anxious solicitude to take power and enjoyment to ourselves. With the best connubial feelings there will be a regard to the order appointed by the Divine Being. Milton says of Adam and Eve, —

—“ In their looks divine,
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,
(Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd,)
Whence true authority in men; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;
For contemplation he and valour form'd;
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.”

On some occasions a feeling of pride has prevented a person from soliciting or receiving favours. When a pair of shoes was left at the door of Dr. Johnson's dormitory at Oxford, the Doctor, being then a lad, and much in want of coverings for his corporeal soles, threw them away with disdain. When Pyrrhus had set at liberty all the prisoners of the Romans and their allies, in return for the favour he had received, on being informed of the treachery of his physician, the Romans immediately sent back an equal number of prisoners to the camp of the king of Epirus. On the other hand, there may be a disposition of meanness which not only receives favours, but depends on them. This was the case with Savage: — instead of gaining his livelihood in an inde-

pendent manner, he was continually trusting to the benevolence of individuals. Dr. Johnson says of Savage, " I know not whether he ever had, for three months together, a settled habitation in which he could claim a right of residence."

There have been several pleasing examples of gratitude. In the contest between Charles I. and his parliament, Sir William Davenant was taken by the parliamentary forces and condemned to die, but was spared at the request of Milton. After a short time Milton fell into a similar danger, and Davenant nobly repaid the favour by interceding for Milton, and obtaining his life and liberty. Warriors have been laden with favours by grateful nations, and legislators have been honoured by the grateful remembrance of their successors. When the Roman army was engaged with the Etrurians, Horatius Cocles defended a bridge for some time against the whole force of the enemy, and by this means he turned the battle in favour of his countrymen. For this important service the Romans erected a statue of him in the temple of Vulcan, gave him as much land as he could plough in a day with two yoke of oxen, and a handsome sum of money. Solon among the Athenians, Lycurgus among the Lacedemonians, and Numa among the Romans, — if they were not honoured as much as they deserved in their lives, received the grateful homage of thousands after they were dead.

Ingratitude is a brutal vice. It is a disposition which no man will acknowledge himself to possess. It is never connected with virtue, and consequently an ungrateful man is a bad member of society.

History exhibits some memorable instances of this disgraceful feeling. Caligula poisoned many persons who had appointed him for their heir; and Vitellius, having condemned a wealthy citizen to death, desired to see the unfortunate person's will; and when he found that he himself was left executor conjointly with another, he not only ordered the poor fellow to be executed immediately, but he caused the other executor to be brought out and put to death, that he might enjoy the whole of the property. Ingratitude sometimes arises from a foolish notion of etiquette. When the Emperor Basilius I. was hunting, a large stag ran furiously at him, and, striking one of his antlers inside the Emperor's girdle, dragged him away. One of the nobles in attendance sprang forward and cut the girdle with his sword, and thus preserved the Emperor's life; but the noble was beheaded for putting his weapon so near the monarch's body!

CHAP. XVII.

ON PRAISE AND BLAME.

PRAISE is exceedingly grateful to human nature. It is an acknowledgment of certain bodily or mental excellencies, which are possessed by the person to whom the commendation is addressed. It is useful in a moderate degree, the excess alone is injurious. Praise brightens our prospects, and exhilarates our feelings; it is like the cheerful sun on the harvest day, which encourages the labourers. But blame is like the gathering clouds of a winter evening, which darken and perplex the foolish or unfortunate wanderer. If praise be carried to an extreme, it becomes flattery; if blame be carried further than it ought, it becomes scandal,—and both are unjust. “He that slanders me,” observes Cowper, “paints me blacker than I am, and he that flatters me, whiter — they both daub me.” A love of praise will sometimes induce people to act inconsistently, and a fear of censure will prevent them from opposing vice and patronising virtue. Some men are exceedingly pleased with smooth language: this would be proper, if smoothness and truth accompanied each other; but these persons would much rather be deceived by a pleasing account, than be correctly informed by unpleasant intelligence. When Charles II. was in the Low

Countries, the governor of those provinces told him, that his master, Don Juan, had positively commanded him to fill up his despatches with good news, whether it were true or false. This is folly, — for knowledge is power. Correct information enables us to remove evils, and prevent the occurrence of further disadvantages. Ignorance will not preserve a man from destruction when dangers are about to overwhelm him. The ostrich, when it is pursued by the hunters, buries its head in the sand, or in a thicket, and fancies itself secure; but a valiant and prudent man will prefer a correct view of the dangers to which he is exposed, that by timely care he may avoid them. Monarchs are too frequently nurtured in the lap of ignorance, and surrounded by lying courtiers. They are sometimes afraid to look around them, or within them; for having discovered that they have been deceived in many respects, they are timid, lest they should have been misinformed in others; and thus the splendours of royalty are attended by uneasiness; and many a man has been stripped of his power, hurled from his throne, and condemned to exile, or a dungeon, or a scaffold, without any warning of his fate.

A certain measure of commendation is not only just, but it is beneficial, as a stimulus to individuals and communities. The patriot, the man of science and of letters, is animated by its influence, and excited to future labours: he fancies no exertion too great for the good opinion of mankind. The warrior covered with blood, disfigured by wounds, and encompassed by difficulties, is

pleased with the expectation of human applause. It is said of Alexander that it was his principal wish to be praised by the Athenians. When he was endeavouring to overcome the obstacles which opposed the passage of the Hydaspes, he exclaimed, "O Athenians, could you suppose to what dangers I expose myself for the sake of being celebrated by you?" There is a higher principle than this — the esteem or commendation of the Supreme Being; but many a noble-minded philanthropist, and many a pious divine, although they are conscious that their conduct is pleasing to the Deity, would be exceedingly dispirited if their fellow-creatures were to pass upon them an universal vote of censure; while, on the other hand, they would be pleased if they perceived that their conduct was generally considered unobjectionable. The approval of our fellow-creatures, and especially of good men, has always been deemed valuable.

A proper regard to a good reputation induces a man to check himself in improper dispositions; — to act honourably, to avoid vice, to cultivate his mental powers, and to become a good member of society. The peripatetics and the stoics, Dr. Beattie has remarked, "thought it their duty to improve their whole nature, so as to make themselves useful and agreeable." The same worthy author has observed, that "we cannot please others if we show them what is displeasing in ourselves, or give them reason to think that we perceive displeasing qualities in them."

The expectation of the praise of our fellow-creatures after we have left this world is some-

times very powerful. To obtain an illustrious name, or a statue, sometimes induces the warrior and the legislator to spend their blood or their talent for the good of their country. To have temples dedicated to one's memory, and cities called after one's name, is a stimulus even to kings to act justly and to rule vigorously. Immortality, however, it must be granted, is imaginary. It is an expectation rather than a realisation. "Men please themselves," observes Mr. Wollaston, "with notions of immortality, and fancy a perpetuity of fame to be secured to them by books, and the testimonies of historians; but, alas! it is a stupid delusion, when they imagine themselves present, and enjoying that fame in the reading of their story after death." The persons who have performed exploits, which call forth the general acclamations of mankind, are gone to that world of spirits, where the most magnificent pageantry of a former state will either be forgotten or will resemble only the dim remembrance of a dream. There will then be no human vision to give them a distant glimpse of the material world, and no organs of hearing to convey the melodious sounds of the trumpet of fame. No intelligence will come to inform them whether their names be honoured or despised. No angel would deem it a worthy errand to carry to a departed soul the news of funeral processions and public mourning, of statues and mausoleums, of dirges and elegies. Besides, the judgment of man is frequently very erroneous with regard to the character of deceased persons. Sometimes the public actions of a man are known and extolled, but his private con-

duct, though disgraceful, is veiled in oblivion; and, at other times, the public performances of a person are faulty, and these are condemned, but his private life, which is very praiseworthy, is forgotten. The Egyptians adopted a better method; for when a man of celebrity died, they appointed a council of enquiry for the investigation of his character, that a just degree of praise or blame might be connected with his memory.

While we continue in this world, we are bound to act agreeably with its reasonable customs; and while we are connected with human nature, we shall find ourselves involuntarily complying with the dictates of humanity: and thus, although the expectation of fame will never be realised by a departed spirit, and although the trifles of earth will appear contemptible in comparison with the splendour and enjoyments of heaven, yet the expectation of this reward stimulates exertion, and is therefore beneficial to society. We are so much ruled by association, that the anticipation of honour after death affects us almost as much as if it were enjoyed at present. Indeed the anticipation is pleasant, and therefore it may be deemed a good. The feeling in favour of posthumous fame is so general, that no one could be found who would not rather have his name respected than despised after he had left the world.

When censure goes further than it ought, it becomes abuse. There is more censure in the world than reason or justice would demand. People are too full of hints, conjectures, and mischief-making. "If all men knew," observed Pascal,

“ what is said of them by others, there would be no friendship.” When blame is regulated by the rules of reason, and when it is intended for the purpose of benefiting the faulty person, it is commendable; but then it should be spoken to him, rather than *of* him: it should be communicated privately, except his character were so very bad, and his conduct so perverse, that nothing but shame would influence him, and then he may be publicly admonished, both as a check to the aggressor and a warning to others. When it arises from a desire of injuring the reputation of a neighbour, and not for the purpose of improving his conduct, it is wicked and disgraceful: in this case it is spoken in the absence of the person to whom it refers, and any where rather than in his hearing: this is usually termed slander, or scandal; but these terms are not confined to this particular kind of abuse. Shakspeare describes it as a weapon, —

“ Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds.”

Those who encourage this cowardly and fiendish disposition ought to be transported to some solitary island, where their sphere of observation would be small, and their faculty of invention useless; but then, like wild beasts, they would prey on one another. The love of scandal arises generally from a consciousness of personal or mental defects; from envy and malice; from cruelty and vice. It is exactly the opposite of that golden rule — “Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.”

There is a humorous and well-told incident by Sterne: — “ ‘There are people,’ continued the corporal, ‘who can’t even breathe without slandering a neighbour.’ — ‘You judge too severely,’ replied my aunt Prudy, ‘no one is slandered who does not deserve it.’ — ‘That may be,’ retorted the corporal, ‘but I have heard very light things said of *you*.’ The face of my aunt kindled with anger. ‘*Me!*’ she exclaimed, ‘*me!* slight things of *me!* what can any body say of *me?*’ ” The same persons who mangle their neighbours so barbarously are themselves susceptible of the slightest touch. They are also, in most cases, more frail and more liable to immoral conduct. A great deal of what is retailed among the gossips is exaggerated, but much is invented! “When scandal is true,” observes Sir Jonah Barrington, “it is (as some ladies have assured me) considered by the whole sex as scarcely worth listening to; and actually requiring a very considerable exaggeration to render it at all amusing!” But Sir Jonah is rather unfair in alluding to the female sex, as the only retailers of scandal: a great deal is invented and published by men; this may be seen in the political world. But one reason why the softer sex may be harder in their censures arises from the superior facility of the ladies in the use of language: they can hit more closely than men, in general, are capable of doing: and the reason why females scandalise more frequently than the other sex, is because they talk more; and this loquacity arises from the nature of their engagements. Females sit and employ themselves with needlework; but the fingers and the

tongue may be engaged at the same moment. Men are employed in reading, writing, and other avocations, in which conversation is necessarily checked. And besides this, with regard to the ladies, they have few matters of importance to think of; they have no mercantile or professional business to converse about, and no politics or science, except on a small scale; consequently, having much leisure and much ability, with no variety of other subjects for conversation, they frequently turn their attention to scandal — for this is interesting and never-failing. There is a good reason why maiden ladies should be greater sinners, in regard to evil speaking, than other females are, especially if they be not obliged to obtain their maintenance; for, having few domestic matters to occupy their time, and few necessary engagements, they would find nothing to amuse themselves with, agreeably with their inclination, except they could fall upon and mangle some of their neighbours' characters! Persons with large families, or with young children, are not such gossippers and scandalisers; and people of good sense and honour (and many of these there are among the ladies) avoid low scurrility and backbiting; because the former have something else to do, and the latter have a natural aversion to it. How much better would it be, if all, who have much leisure, would employ it in deeds of benevolence, in pleasing accomplishments, in the fine arts, in literature and science! for these would not only produce no evil, but they would be positively beneficial.

A zealous declamation against improper conduct,

against meanness, vice, and folly, is not always the result of pure morality ; for it is probable that one half of the world who thus abuse the rest would do the same if they possessed facilities for acting in this manner.

There is scarcely a more despicable thing in creation than a human female, old and shrivelled, whose countenance denotes envy, malice, and cruelty ; whose words are like a two-edged sword, wielded by a madman ; whose breath resembles the pestiferous vapour arising from poisonous volatile spirits ; whose smile is a deadly blight ; what a curse is such a wretch to society ! What a disgrace to her own sex ! How much mischief and disquietude does she make ! How much friendship and social comfort does she mar ! Cowper has described such a wretch, —

“ In faithful memory she records the crimes
Or real, or fictitious, of the times ;
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm’s length in scorn.”

These pests, however, are happily scarce ; they are desecrated as much by the worthier part of their own sex as they are by men.

When fair language is used towards a person in his presence, and foul insinuations are made of him in his absence, it is backbiting or treachery. This is usually practised for the purpose of retaining favour, and gratifying malice, at the same time ; but this disposition is exceedingly despicable ; no man of honour or virtue would encourage it. This has been practised sometimes when the person alluded to

has been supposed to be asleep; and thus the double-tongued speaker has been justly detected. The same has occurred when a person has been intoxicated, and it has not been known that the apparently senseless person is frequently capable of receiving sounds and retaining them in his memory; and thus a drunken man becomes conscious of what he said, and of what was said to him. Sometimes scandal and offence are connected with jocoseness and merriment; but it is a barbarous method of promoting mirth — happiness it cannot produce. “Be not scurrilous,” said Lord Burleigh, “in conversation, nor satirical in thy jests.” — “Some men,” observes Cicero, “will sacrifice their best friend for a joke;” but this is a sorry exchange. Scandal sometimes arises from a sudden feeling, without any settled principle of enmity. “There are few,” Dr. Johnson remarks, “who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth, or the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither sense of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtues.” This, however, must be condemned: but it is very different from the habitually irritable and abusive person; “for there are no lies,” as Bayle observes, “which a passionate man will not publish against the honour of his neighbours; and none which some will not be malicious enough to believe.”

It must not be supposed that human nature is free from blemish: if any person think so, or fancy it should be so, let him look within himself, and he

will discover many defects. The greatest slanderer will probably find more foulness in his own breast than in that of his neighbour. Cardinal Mazarine used to say, "that the best men are like beasts for sacrifice; which, though ever so carefully chosen, are found to be defective when they are closely examined." How absurd then for a man to quarrel with another because the other resembles himself! But the explanation of the matter is, that men are influenced too frequently by low selfishness; they love what is beneficial to themselves, and the means by which it is produced; they hate what is injurious to their own interest, and the method by which it is occasioned. Thus they approve and condemn, not what is abstractedly good, but what is most conducive or opposed to their own welfare. One man is worthy and another is unworthy, not because of his intrinsic merit, but because he agrees with, or dissents from, those who judge him; consequently, the most narrow, selfish, and unamiable persons are the most inclined to habitual slandering; the most virtuous will be the least subject to it. The latter will never be disposed to ferret out the faults of their neighbours. The sweeping of chimneys is fit only for smutty persons.

On some occasions, a man who is desirous of making and maintaining peace will be inclined to go rather further than he ought in agreeing with the opinions of others, and thus he will sacrifice his independence and probity; but this must be guarded against with the same care which a person

would evince in avoiding obstinacy, contradiction, and ill-breeding.

Satire is a weapon which should be handled with much discretion. It is, however, often employed in a clumsy manner, and in an unreasonable cause. When it is directed against vice, after a trial of milder means, it will be sometimes beneficial, at any rate it is allowable; but it should never be employed severely on a trifling occasion, nor in any degree for the opposing of justice and virtue. Some men have been greatly annoyed by the efforts of satirists. A little susceptibility in this respect is allowable. Zeno Eleates said, on one occasion, "If I were indifferent to censure, I should be indifferent also to praise." It was maintained by Bion, that a person would possess a high degree of excellence, who could endure reproof with the same composure as praise; but this would be mere stoicism: it would depend on the annihilation of natural and praiseworthy feelings. Every man should be so indifferent as not to practise vice for the purpose of obtaining commendation, nor to avoid virtue for the purpose of escaping censure; but a moderate degree of approval, for worthy conduct, is a payment which justice demands. An inclination to please the Almighty is founded on a similar principle, — we hope to obtain the commendation of the Most High.

Much of the opposition which exists in the world arises from envy and rivalry: a great deal is generated among the professors of arts and sciences, and among men of letters. Every learned man is unfortunately not a good man: every person who

possesses extensive knowledge has not studied himself: every one who possesses strength of mind for the pursuit of science has not strength or inclination enough to check improper dispositions. Many a man of susceptibility has been made uneasy by the criticisms and severe remarks of his contemporaries. The eminent Montesquieu was so affected by the unmerited censures of his enemies, that it shortened his days. Dr. Beattie observes, "To be despised or blamed by an incompetent or uncandid judge may give us a momentary pain, but it ought not to make us unhappy." Firmness of mind, in this case, is sometimes constitutional, and sometimes it arises from education; but the natural disposition may be regulated, and the effects of early teaching may be increased or diminished by subsequent knowledge and practice. That elegant scholar, Balzac, was much disturbed at first by the malice of his enemies, but after a little time he became accustomed to it; and when the number of libels against him was much increased, he formed them into a library, and appeared as much delighted with every new production, as if it had contained an eulogy instead of a satire. And Cardinal Mazarine was so indifferent at the clamours of his opponents, that he suffered every one to write whatever he pleased; and after his death a collection of these productions was made, and placed in the Colbert Library at Paris, amounting to forty-six quarto volumes! Pericles had so steeled his mind against insults, that he cared for nothing, let it come from what quarter it might. On one occasion, a fellow not only abused him in a public assembly, but followed him to his residence, pelt-

ing him all the way with stones. When Pericles had arrived home, he ordered the servant to take a candle and lantern (for it was very dark), and to light the fellow safely to his dwelling !

The rules that are applicable to a private person, in regard to censure, are not appropriate to a public character ; for it seems to be generally understood, that a servant of the community is liable at any time, or in any place, to the blame or approval of the public ; but then all criticism on his performances or conduct should be made in a charitable spirit, and should be given only by those who are capable of judging. An ignorant countryman could not possibly criticise correctly on classical language, and a shallow-pated person could not appreciate the profundity or logical connection of a series of arguments. There is a two-fold error into which people are liable to run ; and, indeed, the maintenance of one extreme by one party generally occasions another by the other party. Some contend that all criticism is improper, especially in regard to theological matters ; others that every sentence is to be tried by the test of logic and ridicule : if the former method were adopted, the quality of public performances would be much lowered ; for a moderate fear of criticism tends to purify both theory and language ; if, however, the check be too severe — if there be blame without mixture of commendation — if excellencies be passed over as unworthy of notice, and defects be magnified, then men of talent would become disheartened—while those who have no reputation to lose, and nothing to fear, would take the field. The private life of a man is

not so much within the province of public criticism, except there be a shameful difference between his doctrine and his practice.

What has been said with regard to a public life will apply to any office, abstracted from him who fills it; or to any character distinct from a person, for these may be proper subjects sometimes for censure and ridicule; and as these things cannot be present to us, or capable of hearing us, we may speak of them in any suitable time and place.

Private abuse or scandal, especially that which arises from envy and malice, is exceedingly hurtful to society. Although the fear of it may sometimes prevent a man from practising evil, yet it deters many from performing what is useful, and it wounds others who are unblamable in their conduct and principles. In many cases, carelessness with regard to praise and blame is professed by persons who are not so indifferent to censure; for it is evident, from their habitual suspiciousness, and their uncharitable mode of interpretation, that they are susceptible of the least disrespectful hint, although they will not acknowledge it. They are like gunpowder ignited, if a word of reproof be expressed; but this pretended carelessness may be the result of anger or recklessness. The expression, "I don't care," may only signify I won't care; that is, I will not suffer myself to be influenced by the fear of consequences. "A good reputation," observes Dr. Beattie, "which alone can procure us the esteem of others, is by every generous mind accounted invaluable." It is neither manlike nor reasonable for a person to be indifferent to his reputation,

even in trifling matters; for as the son of Sirach predicts, — “He that despiseth little things, shall fall by little and little;” and when a good character is lost, it cannot be easily regained. On the other hand, the extreme of timidity and scrupulosity must be avoided, because it makes a person unhappy.

There will be a certain degree of delicacy necessary in speech, as well as in conduct, in our intercourse with society, if we would prevent offence. We are not only required to avoid flattery, but we must avoid coarseness and bluntness. Nothing should be said of an unpleasant kind, except it were absolutely necessary. The person who wounds the feelings of another, through clumsiness or design, is an unworthy member of society. Some people, however, are destitute of sensibility and taste: they must needs form uncouth opinions, and speak them. It has been already observed, that we are bound to avoid hypocrisy; but then we are not compelled to mention all we think; and certainly if an embargo were laid on any person’s tongue, it should be on his who, having no capacity for judging correctly, or no disposition for thinking charitably, or no delicacy for appropriate expression, will yet blunder out his crude and barbarous observations on what he does not understand, and on persons whose conduct deserves a more respectful notice. Perhaps it will be said by these people, “We cannot help it;” but then it is the interest of other persons to check it. A wild beast cannot help his ferocity, nor the monkey his inclination for mischief; but those who

have any thing to preserve, must guard against its depredations : consequently, the company of such persons should be avoided ; and this is generally the case, for as they travel down the vale of life, not improving in pleasing dispositions, or in favour with God or man, they are generally deserted, except by a few, who from relationship are obliged to associate with him. Dr. Beattie observes, " It is right that people should speak their minds ; but the mind that is *fit to be spoken* (if I may express myself so strangely) ought to be free from pride, ostentation, and ill-nature ; for from these hateful passions the bluntness here alluded to may generally be derived."

There are some persons, and these are the more practised and expert, who will praise and exalt one person for the sole purpose of depreciating another ; and yet, perhaps, the very persons who are now exalted will be depressed on another occasion ; so powerful is the disposition for scandal, that not even truth or consistency will serve as a control to its influence.

Another method of scandal-making is by letters anonymously written. The man of courage, whose nerves will allow him to meet his enemy fairly, and whose cause will bear investigation, will never resort to mean and treacherous deeds ; but the assassin will stab in the dark. None but the most base and cowardly character would attack a person without giving him an opportunity of explaining or contradicting the charge. None but a mean and malicious man would accuse another of crimes of which, perhaps, he never thought, for the sole

purpose of making him unhappy. The anonymous assailant gratifies his malice by destroying the happiness of an individual, and sometimes that of a family. How many persons of disordered nerves have been urged into madness and suicide by an assailant of this kind ! At whose door would these murders be laid ? There is, however, one method by which the shaft of malice may be turned aside. A letter of this sort should never be read ; or, if it be looked over, it should be cast immediately into the flames, and not a word should be uttered of its contents. By this means the purpose of the writer would be defeated. He did it to wound the mind of the receiver ; but the pain would be only trifling and temporary, from a rapid glance at the letter, so as to discover its nature : or the writer did it to injure the character of the person among his friends ; but this would be avoided if no one saw it, and the slanderer himself, being necessarily a coward, would never have the courage to declare what he had written.

There may be circumstances in which an anonymous letter may be allowable : — if, for instance, a person were desirous of communicating some beneficial hints to a person with whom he was unacquainted ; or if he wished to convey a sum of money, in the way of benevolence, without being known ; but it is necessary that the welfare of the person to whom the letter is addressed, or to whom it refers, should be the principal object, and that it should be written in appropriate language.

There are two or three rules which should be taken as a guide by all persons who would not

willingly make others unhappy, or themselves hateful. When praise is due, it should be given; but it should be communicated delicately. If the person be unpolished, it may be given in plain language; if the person be well informed, a single hint will do; indeed a man of worth and modesty would be uneasy at formal praise. If a person cannot bear a little commendation, if it fill him with conceit, and make him careless of his duty, give him no more, — he was unworthy of that. Antisthenes taught his children to despise those who would praise them. A little encouragement in the way of commendation may be beneficial; but it is better to give no praise, than to give praise which is injudicious. Flattery must be studiously avoided; for in this case a person pretends to believe what he does not think: he magnifies an excellency, and affects to discover merit which has no existence. He that receives flattery with complacency is a fool, and he that gives it is a rogue. No one should award more blame than the conduct of a person would justly merit. He should not darken the character of an absent man with odium, — except it be perfectly true, and necessary as a warning to others, that they may avoid the deceptive and injurious arts of the person alluded to. No one should be anxious or uneasy as to what the world says of him; but he should be very careful to act with propriety. He should not, by searching, increase his grievances. Dr. Jeremy Taylor advises, that no one should be “inquisitive into the affairs of other men, nor the faults of servants, nor the mistakes of friends.” If a man have been

slandered, and he knows it not, he is not the more unhappy. Aristotle having been informed that some one had spoken ill of him, replied, — “ Well, the man may do more; he may beat me if I be not present.” No one should encourage tale-bearers, mischief-makers, and such vermin, who will inform a person what was said, with additions and misconstructions; — for some people are like chimneys, which blacken every thing that passes through them, — or, perhaps, they will communicate what was never spoken, — a mere invention from the beginning to the end. If evil have been unjustly connected with the character of any man, let him outlive it; let him, by a good life, confute the calumny. All persons are bound to speak and act in such a manner, towards each other, as prudence or necessity would demand; but it should always be in accordance with honour and good-will, and always in opposition to meanness and mischief-making, — so that mutual confidence may be produced and maintained, and that, as much as possible, all men may live peaceably.

CHAP. XVIII.

ON HOPE AND DESPAIR.

HOPE, among the ancients, was deified as the goddess Elpis: statues were erected to her honour, temples were dedicated to her, and sacrifices of various kinds were offered to her. Hope may be termed a pleasing expectation. The definition of Locke is conveyed in a greater number of words, but it expresses no more. He calls it "that pleasure in the mind which every one finds in himself, upon the thought of a profitable future enjoyment of a thing which is apt to delight him. Hope *arises* from a favourable construction of probable events; while despondency is produced by an unfavourable prospect. Hope stimulates exertion. "*Possunt quia posse videntur.*" Self-love induces us to acquire, if possible, what is contributive to happiness; but if there be no chance of obtaining it, we sink into despondency and inactivity. Hope and despair are most powerful when the imagination is most active; for this carries us into the future, among probable and possible events; and in proportion to the brilliancy or dulness of the colouring so shall we be elated or depressed. Hope is lively in youth, but it is sobered in manhood. Experience shows us the uncertainty of trusting to expectation; and thus there are fewer disappoint-

ments among the aged than among the young. Youth illumines every thing, age darkens it; but when the cheering influence of hope ceases to operate with regard to this life, then may the soul contemplate with more interest the happiness reserved for the pious, in that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Hoary heads are frequently accompanied by sickness and despondency. The tender nestling springs about on the highest branches of the tree on which its nest is fixed, and chirps and delights itself with novelties,—with the leaves, with the blossom, with the sunbeams glittering among the branches; while the aged bird seeks some solitary spot, in the shade of the thicket, by the side of the rivulet, — whose mournful waters chant the dying dirge, and there it breathes out its being.

Hope cheers us in our daily engagements. It tranquillises the mind with respect to future events. We judge of the future by the past. The sun rose to-day, we hope it will rise to-morrow; we enjoy good health, and we hope we shall enjoy it in future; we have embarked in various engagements with success, and we hope to be equally fortunate on other occasions. The agriculturist is completely dependent on hope: he perceives no present reward for his labours; but being stimulated by the expectation of future good, he converts the stagnant marsh into a fruitful meadow; the barren plain into fields of bending corn; the sterile hill is covered with groves of trees; hollows are filled up, rocks are removed, hillocks are levelled, and the desert is changed into a garden. It was hope

that stimulated Columbus to embark in his novel and dangerous expedition, — that buoyed him up amidst opposition. When assistance was denied him by one sovereign, he applied to another. We can imagine him, with his three vessels, about to leave his native shores, accompanied by the good wishes, but the gloomy anticipations, of his countrymen. It was imagined, in that age of ignorance, that the world was a plane; that the ocean extended for a certain space, and beyond this there were only clouds and darkness. Without doubt there were some timid souls, who fancied that, in the gloom of the night, they might reach the verge of the waters, and glide down the precipice, to the shades of oblivion. The seamen themselves, after long sailing, were terrified with forebodings, and, rising simultaneously, they objected to a further progress; but the star of hope, in the gleamings of which across the ocean Columbus had hitherto directed his course, still shone, and the intrepid voyager begged only for three days, and within this period he reached the shores of the American continent. It was the same principle that animated Bruce to that degree of mental vigour which was necessary for conquering the difficulties which he had to encounter in his progress to the source of the Nile. When he endured hunger, thirst, and weariness; when he passed through hostile and barbarous countries; when oppositions of almost every kind interposed, in order to prevent him from realising his wishes, the star of hope shone upon him, and induced him to proceed, until, at last, he pitched his tent on the very spot which many an expedition

in vain had attempted to reach. In civilising mankind, the operation of this principle has been essentially necessary. In the improvement of the human mind, as it is with the culture of the ground, difficulties arise, and no fruit is apparent for a considerable time ; but at last the intellectual desert becomes a garden, and fountains of genius and virtue burst forth where ignorance and vice had previously existed. By the influence of hope the Jesuits persevered in instructing and civilising the inhabitants of Paraguay, until a tribe of savages became changed into some of the most cultivated inhabitants of the globe. Three hundred thousand families in that country enjoyed the sweets of tranquillity and happiness. Hope enabled William Penn to overcome every difficulty, and establish a colony in the wilds of North America, which is now free, moral, wealthy, and powerful.

The influence of hope has excited men to great and glorious exploits ; and it has kept them in the steady pursuit of wealth, science, and virtue. It was this principle which enabled William Tell to take a correct aim, and to keep a steady hand, when he struck the apple from the head of his son ; and it was this which inspired the peasantry to kill their tyrannical governor, and to free their country from a foreign yoke. It was a higher kind of hope, a confidence in the power of the Almighty, which inspired Moses to conduct the children of Israel from the kingdom of Egypt ; to lead them across the bed of the ocean, while on each side was a precipitous wall of water ; to guide them over the sandy plains of Arabia, and

through the countries of hostile nations, until they came within sight of the fertile Canaan.

Hope serves as a guide to the child, to carry him onward from one step of knowledge to another ; it stimulates the peasant or the mechanic, who is endowed with genius, to travel on the thorny path of learning. And when a man is highly cultivated, it induces him to make some mighty effort for the accomplishing of what may crown him with immortality. Milton voluntarily chose labour and intense study, that he might (to use his own language) "leave something so written to after-times, that they should not willingly let it die."

In suffering the ills of life hope supports us. "Hope in adversity," observes Dr. Beattie, "is favourable to happiness ; fear in prosperity is favourable to virtue." And Armstrong says, hope is one of the most vital movements, the "balm and life-blood of the soul." When we are sick, we calculate on the returning joys of health. The poor man, when he suffers hunger, looks forward to the period when his wants will be supplied ; when the silent grief of his wife, and the cries of his children, will not affect his feelings. If we experience cold or excessive heat, weariness and hardships, we anticipate the period when we shall enjoy repose. When we are engaged in war, we look forward to the tranquil scenes of peace ; and when earthly prospects are gloomy, hope bursts forth, and shows us more attractively the enjoyments of a future state.

" Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,

On steady wings sails through th' immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear."

COWPER.

Our expectations with regard to the enjoyments of a future world cannot be raised too high, for it hath not entered into the mind of man to conceive the happiness of heaven. But with respect to earthly anticipations, we may give the reins to our fancy, and calculate erroneously: the result of this will be disappointment. If the merchant anticipate an unusually large profit by a speculation, he will expect to gain what will rarely happen; the chances, therefore, are against him, in the same proportion as the expectation runs beyond ordinary success. If a tempting offer be made of an extraordinary gain for a small advance, let those who have property beware; for in the same degree as the offer goes beyond the bounds of usual gain, so will be the risk of deception and loss. The speculators in South-Sea property, in Mexican mines, and in many other ways, have been grievously disappointed of their hopes. In the pursuit of learning, also, if a man calculate on gaining more than his fellow-men, his chance of disappointment will be increased. And in the attainment of honours, he will run a risk of being defeated in his purpose, in the same proportion as he calculates on mounting very high. When the imagination takes the reins, a man is apt to run beyond the boundary of reason and probability. Philips says of such a visionary, —

“ His wandering feet the magic paths pursue,
And, while he thinks the fair illusion true,
The tractless scenes disperse in fluid air,
And woods, and wilds, and thorny ways appear.”

It is better to calculate on what may be worse than the reality, than buoy ourselves up with notions which will never be realised. When danger is about to encompass us, and we are compelled to bear it, and we need all our energies for this purpose, it is better to calculate on the worst kind of probability, and to satisfy ourselves with that. If the anticipation disturb us, and weaken our moral courage, it will be better to think more favourably of coming events; but, if we can make ourselves capable of bearing the worst, then we shall feel exhilarated and endowed with new vigour, when we find that our lot is better than we expected. When Cæsar was about to begin an action with King Juba, or for two or three days before the fighting began, his soldiers became alarmed at the reported number of the enemy's force. Cæsar, in reply to the enquiries of his men, informed them that the strength of the opposing army was greater than they imagined; but immediately before the battle began, the troops were shown, by authentic evidence, that the number of the enemy was much less than had been reported; Cæsar's soldiers immediately became animated by the most vigorous courage, and rushed forwards with impetuosity to the attack. When a certain event will probably happen — war or pestilence, for instance — we should strengthen ourselves to contemplate calmly the worst; and then, when the hour of danger

arrives, we shall feel little anxiety or dread, — we shall be prepared for it; and if we find it less dreadful than we expected, we shall gain courage at the very moment when we shall most want it. But if we endeavour to buoy ourselves up by hoping the evil will not come, and yet it should come, we shall be dispirited. We should thus be elated before the danger arrived, and when we did not need elation; while in the moment of trial we should despond, and be incapable of performing our duty.

It is a great blessing that we cannot contemplate all the evils which will happen in our lives; for the view of such a multitude, and some of them so weighty, would press down our spirits, and almost destroy our reason. Even those which we can foresee require in us a great deal of fortitude and care, that we may meet them properly. The time and manner of our death are wisely and benevolently hid from us, and thus the ignorance of the future allows the existence of hope; for, as St. Paul observes, that which is seen is not hope. An anxiety to pry into futurity by omens, fortune-telling, astrology, and other absurd methods, is as injurious to human happiness as it is fruitless in unravelling the mysteries of fate. Jeremy Taylor says, — “This day is mine and yours, but ye know not what shall be on the morrow; and every morning creeps out of a dark cloud, leaving behind it an ignorance and silence deep as midnight, and undiscerned as are the phantasms that make a chrisom-child to smile; so that we cannot discern what comes hereafter, unless we had a light from

heaven brighter than the vision of an angel, even the spirit of prophecy." Milton thus advises those who are inclined to grope their way into futurity, for the purpose of discovering the evils to which they may be subject, —

——“ Be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils ;
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid ? ”

And Cicero remarks, — “ *Sæpe autem ne utile quidem est scire, quid futurum est.* ” Man is certainly born to trouble; the thorns of disappointment wound his feet while he pursues his journey through life; he grasps at the shadow, and loses the substance; the clouds of sorrow darken his path. Isaac Ambrose observes, — “ The chamber hath its care, the house hath its fear, the field hath its toil, the country hath its frauds, the city hath its factions, the church hath its sects, the court hath its envy, the beggar hath his sores, the soldier hath his scars, the magistrate hath his troubles, the merchant his travels, the nobles their crosses, and the great ones their vexations. ” We should, therefore, prepare our minds for what we know must happen; but we should not disturb ourselves with imaginary sorrows: we should confine our expectations within the bounds of reason; and when we are surrounded by actual evils, we should cheer ourselves with the anticipations of a happier day.

When hope brightens only to deceive us, the effect is exceedingly painful. The poets describe

Tantalus as chained in a lake, the pure and grateful waters of which reached his chin; but the moment he attempted to drink, the fluid passed away from his mouth. He was shaded by branches of trees bending with delicious fruit; but when he stretched out his hand to grasp them, they sprang from his reach. This almost seems to be the case with some persons in the present day; they hope, they strive, and they fail: but it generally results from an unreasonable expectation, a calculation without a proper foundation; or it arises from an insufficient or a misapplied energy. Multitudes of people not only err in their calculation of gain, but in their hopes of pleasure. The traveller expects, when he sets out on his expedition, that he shall experience a high degree of enjoyment; but if he travel in his own country he has not perhaps calculated on gloomy weather, scorching heat, or severe cold, rain, or dust, fatigue, impositions, and disappointments. A person sits at home, by a cheerful fire in a comfortable room, and there he reads of voyages and travels, and looks at beautiful engravings of magnificent temples, or interesting remains, and he fancies that he also would be a traveller: he would roam on the wide seas, and explore foreign regions. All this may be well enough in imagination, but it will be very different in reality. When Thomson the poet was in Rome, he said, — “One may imagine fine things in reading ancient authors; but to travel is to dissipate that vision.” And if Rome would scarcely repay the traveller for his trouble, how would deserts, and countries in-

habited by barbarians, furnish him with delight proportionate to his toil? A certain place is represented by an ingenious writer, and adorned with all the colouring of the imagination; some part reality, and some part fiction; or it is exhibited by the painter with a brilliant sky and ground covered with verdure, or huge rocks and rugged precipices, or tranquil lakes, or the ocean with gay vessels sailing on it; but the traveller views it without its flattering accompaniments: the sky may be dark, the atmosphere damp and chilly, the rocks and precipices not superior to what he has seen before, the ground sterile, a monument nothing but a few uninteresting stones, and thus the reality differs from the expectation; but he also, if he write about it, must make his story attractive, or he will be thought a stupid fellow, and no one will read his works, and thus error is propagated.

At home a person may in a few hours travel from the northern to the southern pole, while the most attractive objects on the globe may excite and please his fancy; but the traveller suffers much weariness and many privations in order to follow the windings of a river, or to examine a pyramid or a pillar. When he sets out on his expedition from his native land, he has much trouble in providing himself with necessaries, and some difficulty in obtaining passports, letters of introduction, &c. Then he may be confined for a month or two in a dirty vessel, the sport of storms, where he may suffer in sickness the torments of a hundred deaths. He then lands among strangers of an unknown language: his manners to

them are frequently ridiculous, and theirs to him unnatural; after much loneliness, much imposition, much danger, and much uneasiness, he contrives to view this or that object of interest, he takes sketches and memorandums, he gladly directs his course towards his native soil; he endures many hardships, and arrives tired of his expedition; and then, if he means to publish, he commences his new and equally unsuccessful labours.

An adventure which occurred to Chateaubriand in the vicinity of Argos, is only one of the many perils which a man encounters in a foreign country. "Our guide," he observes, "soon after missed his way, and led us along narrow causeways, which formed the separation between small ponds and inundated rice fields. In this embarrassing situation night overtook us; at every step we were obliged to leap wide ditches, with our horses intimidated with the darkness, the croaking of a host of frogs, and the violet-coloured flames that danced along the marsh. Our guide's horse fell; and, as we marched in a row, we tumbled one over another into a ditch. We all cried out together, so that none of us knew what the other said. The water was deep enough for the horses to swim, and be drowned with their riders: my puncture began to bleed afresh, and my head was very painful. At length we miraculously scrambled out of this slough, but found it impossible to proceed to Argos. We perceived between the roads a glimmering light; we made up towards it, perishing with cold, covered with mud, leading our horses

by the bridle, and running the risk of plunging at every step into some fresh quagmire."

Disappointment will follow us in every case, if we suffer ourselves to anticipate too much. If a man be about to go into company, and he calculate on receiving much delight, although the hope be pleasant, yet he will be dispirited if the reality be inferior to the expectation. We are continually influenced by comparison. Those engagements which depend on mental vigour will be well performed in proportion to their importance, and the pleasure or success we experience in our exertions. If the orator, for instance, calculates on addressing a large and attentive audience, but the number of attendants is very small, and those who are present are careless whether they listen or not, he becomes dispirited — he does not feel vigour enough to carry him on, except it be drudgingly. The same effect will sometimes arise, if he finds the engagement unpleasant or unprofitable with regard to pecuniary remuneration or fame. If he fancied, beforehand, that he was a perfect master of his subject — that he should express himself fluently and appropriately — but, on the trial, he discovers that he does come up to his own standard of excellence, although it may not appear objectionable to his hearers, it will make him spiritless. But, if on the other hand, he calculates on a thin audience — though a crowded one would please him better; and if he imagines, that he shall go onward with little confidence and ability (if this feeling be not so powerful as to prevent him from doing any thing); it will serve to make the reality

appear more cheering; and thus a man will go onward with a continually brightening prospect. A talented person fails more frequently because he has not a sufficient stimulus, than because of the difficulty or magnitude of the engagement. A first speech in any particular place is frequently the best speech, because a man does not suffer hope to blind him, and prevent him from using labour; afterwards, the apparent importance of the performance is diminished, and he is apt to become indolent and careless. In this, as in all other cases, we should employ every proper measure for insuring success, but we should not calculate too highly.

When we are anxiously desirous of a thing, we sometimes put our hope in the place of certainty, and feel a confidence arising from it. When we enquire of a person the probable issue of an event, he may reply, — “I hope it will terminate favourably.” Now, we receive no argument from him in favour of his statement; but, as hope must be founded on evidence, we take the expression as a species of evidence. By the same rule, when we are anxiously waiting for a certain result, we sometimes involuntarily introduce a feeling of hope, and sometimes a wish; and this, by an association of feelings, gives us a momentary confidence. From a similar feeling, a person, when he is anxious to tread softly, makes a gentle noise with his breath, that he may not hear his footsteps; and thus he fancies, for the moment, that others will not hear him.

Disappointments not only arise in our waking hours, but they are sometimes produced by the

delightful visions of the night. When Mungo Park reached Bubaker in Africa, he halted in the vicinity of a tank, or well, for two or three days, before he could procure a sufficient quantity of water to quench his thirst, — the place being much crowded by men and cattle. During this period of painful delay, he says, — “No sooner had I shut my eyes, than fancy would convey me to the streams and rivulets of my native land : there, as I wandered along the verdant bank, I surveyed the clear stream with transport, and hastened to swallow the delightful draught ; but, alas ! disappointment awakened me, and I found myself a lonely captive, perishing of thirst, amid the wilds of Africa ;” — thus strikingly illustrating the beautiful language of Isaiah, — “The thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint.”

We may generally expect only ordinary occurrences, but sometimes we may look for those which are extraordinary. The art of knowing where to hope, and where to check our anticipation, arises from experience and the exercise of the judgment.

Despondency, or despair, is, of course, the opposite of hope. It is the most melancholy state in which a being can be. Satan exclaimed, when his hopes of power were met by degradation, —

“ So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
Farewell remorse ; all good to me is lost.”

What a dreadful condition ! On such an occasion the mental energy is destroyed, the mind is para-

lised, courage is changed to fear, and brightness to gloom. The description of the fallen spirits, in their place of torment, is most hopeless : —

“ A dungeon horrible on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed ; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible,
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,
That comes to all.”

The most eminent example of despair among human beings, was that which was exhibited at the deluge. When the fountains of the great deep were broken up ; when the rains descended from heaven, and the waters began to accumulate on the surface of the earth ; when the ark moved off majestically on the rolling torrent, — the Creator himself being the pilot ; — then the inhabitants of the earth began to tremble, and to cry to their gods ; but their deities were deaf or asleep. The frightened multitude left their pursuit of riches, of fame, and of honour ; and, with their wives and their little ones, in the agonies of distress, they fled from their homes, they knew not whither ; some escaped to the hills and the mountains. The valleys and the plains became the bed of one almost universal ocean ; — the relentless water had swept away the hut and the palace, the arbour and the castle ; it had desolated scenes of rural happiness ; it had buried gardens, vineyards, and forests. The highest parts of the globe were covered by thousands of human beings, as a rock in the midst of the sea is sometimes covered with a flock of birds,

wedged together upon its narrow limits; so the hapless inhabitants of the globe were crowded on the summit of mountains; and still closer did they gather together as the waters approached. Sometimes, perhaps, in the desperation of despair, they would contend for a place of temporary safety, and, in the contest, the assailers and those who were assailed would roll together into the watery grave. Some, worn out by hunger and weariness, dropped from the rocks where they had clung. Husbands perished in the presence of their wives, and wives in the sight of their distressed husbands; and children sunk into the waves, their parents being unable to support them. From the universal din of lamentation, which almost rended the heavens, a dead stillness ensued, — the speechless horror of despair; crowds dropped off momentarily, until one man might have been left, as the last offering to death. What a forlorn condition! What must have been his feelings, when he saw nothing above him but an angry and darkened sky, and nothing around him but devouring waves! He also sunk: and thus the catalogue of human wo, among these obstinate but miserable wretches, was completed.

When a comparatively small degree of fear is connected with the future, it is termed foreboding; for, although this word properly signifies to know beforehand, yet, in common usage, to forebode means to look forward gloomily. Sometimes a trifling hint, or an unimportant circumstance, causes a powerful sensation of fear, with regard to occurrences of which we have not heard, or to future events which may be disastrous. This impression,

on some occasions, is so indefinite, that we almost think it supernatural. When Dr. Swift received a letter with an account of Gay's death, — although he had no sufficient reason for harbouring fear, — he laid it aside for several days, not having courage enough to read the contents. On some occasions, there is an indefinable impression of dread which arises from an uneasy conscience. Brutus says, —

“ Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar,
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.”

Despondency will sometimes arise, because the blessings of Providence seem to be withheld, and we appear to be consigned to poverty; or it will be produced by the reflection, that we enjoy all which we can possibly expect in this life. This was the case with Alexander. A man on a journey arrives at the summit of a hill, and then, if he proceed, he must descend. Amasis, King of Egypt, broke off all connection with Polycrates of Samos, because the latter had been exceedingly fortunate, and the Egyptian monarch thought that some great calamity must follow. “It is one species of despair,” observes Shenstone, “to have no room to hope for any addition to one's happiness. And Lord Bacon says, — “It is a miserable state of mind, to have few things to desire, and many things to fear.”

There are but few cases in which a man is perfectly destitute of hope; for if his pursuits in one way fail, and his future prospects appear dark, he

generally turns to another, and there hope will probably illumine his footsteps. If he can find nothing to support him in this life, he looks forward to a cessation of his troubles. But the description of Satan, by Milton, is a representation of perfect despair : —

“ Me miserable ! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair ?
Which way I fly is hell ; myself am hell.”

Men should encourage a feeling of hope from the very circumstance that they know not what may happen. The method of judging by analogy is not always applicable to human experience. Because a man was prosperous, it does not follow that he must always be so ; indeed, too much confidence will cause his ruin : and because he has been unsuccessful, there is no reason why he should continue to fail, except he become dispirited and do nothing ; for as the wheel of fortune revolves, and exhibits to us only one part of its margin, the next gift may be more pleasing ; for if we have had what is very bad, we may sooner expect a change : we may gain hope, therefore, from the very cause of our despondency. A young man in London had met with many cross circumstances ; he seemed, in all his speculations, to go astray ; he was, as Moore says, —

“ A wandering bark, upon whose pathway shone
All stars of heav’n, except the guiding one !”

In the bitterness of his distress he determined to destroy himself ; and was walking towards the

New River, into which he intended to plunge himself; but a carriage attracted his attention; and looking on the armorial bearings, he perceived the motto — “Never despair:” he immediately took courage; the clouds of despondency rolled away, and he became tranquil and cheerful; he turned his attention, with much energy and caution, to his worldly engagements; and in a short time he rose above his difficulties, and afterwards became rich. The principal reason why men do not succeed in the acquirement of good, is because they have not a sufficient stimulus, or because they are not sufficiently careful. Most men, after a failure, can look back, and attribute their misfortune to indolence or carelessness. And if this be the case, why should we, as we generally do, attribute our evils to Providence? Cowper says to the desponding man, —

“Beware of desp’rate steps; the darkest day
(Live till to-morrow) will have pass’d away.”

There is a beautiful example of the bounty of Providence under the most desperate circumstances, in the case of Hagar and Ishmael. There was also an eminent example, unconnected with miraculous power, in the history of Aristomenes. This skilful and successful general was taken by the Lacedemonians, and thrown into a deep cavern among a number of dead bodies, where no beams of hope scarcely could reach him. But after he had remained there for three or four days, he heard a fox gnawing a body at a short distance from him: he sprang forwards and seized the animal by the

hind leg with one hand, while with the other he held it by the under jaw, that it might not bite him; he then followed the struggling beast to a hole, through which he suffered it to go. He began immediately with his hands to enlarge the orifice, and in the course of two days he found himself in the midst of his delighted countrymen.

There is a pleasing instance of the influence of hope in the history of Alexander. This warrior, as Bayle observes, was endowed with qualities which were extremely noble and extremely base. Before the Macedonian set out on his Asiatic expedition, he divided his hereditary possessions among his friends; giving to one a village, to another a town, and to a third a city: and when he was asked what he had reserved for himself, he replied — Hope. When Louis XVI. had mounted the scaffold on which his life was to be offered as a victim to popular fury, his confessor, Edgworth, seeing that all earthly hope was gone, used this sublime and consolatory exclamation: — “*Enfant de Saint Louis, montez au ciel!*” All nations, whether they be polished or barbarous, rationally delight themselves with the hopes of a future life. The Greenlander, among his snows, looks forward to a paradise of perennial summer; to an ever-brilliant sun; to a region of rest and enjoyment. The African, on the torrid zone, anticipates a period when he shall dwell in some delightful country, beneath the pleasant shade of myrtle and orange trees, by the side of cool and grateful streams. The Indian also, agreeably with Pope’s

poetical description, pleases himself with a similar reflection : —

“ Lo ! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind ;
His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way ;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Beyond the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heaven ;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold ;
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.”

The Mahomedan looks forward to a region of the most enchanting beauty, where he shall have his senses refined and made more susceptible of delight ; where he will walk on plains of silver ; where the river of immortal life will glide along — its crystal waves glittering in perpetual sunshine ; where golden palm-trees adorn the margin of rivulets, whose waters roll on precious stones ; where the most fragrant perfumes, the most delicious fruits, the most enchanting songs, and the most ecstatic pleasures, will always delight the faithful follower of Mahomed. The Christian possesses a more sublime and less sensual heaven. The Moslem imagines the description in the Koran to be literal ; the Christian supposes the account in the Bible to be figurative. The Moslem's is a heaven of sense ; the Christian's is a heaven of mind. The Christian, therefore, has an equally delightful anticipation, builded on a firmer foundation.

CHAP. XIX.

ON LOVE AND HATRED.

LOVE is admiration, accompanied with a desire of possession. It applies more commonly to conscious beings; but a man is said to love a jewel, a painting, or a statue. If our regard be excited by irrational animals — a dog or a bird, for example — we indulge its inclinations, and endeavour to increase its happiness. If it be raised by rational creatures, it causes friendship; and if between the sexes, it forms what is more emphatically designated love. This term, however, can be applied only in a low sense to inanimate things; indeed, the phrase, I love this, or that, in reference to food or clothing, is exceedingly vulgar. And it cannot generally be used with much propriety towards brute creatures. There may be fondness, liking, kindness, and tenderness; but the words respect, esteem, and friendship, are totally inapplicable, if they be used in this way.

As the terms to which I have alluded should seldom be used except towards rational beings; so we should take care to regulate our feelings, so as not to lavish on a cat, an owl, or a lap-dog, what would be appropriate only for a child, a wife, or a husband. Cornelius Agrippa was fond of a large

black dog, which he often kissed, and allowed to eat out of the same dish with him. Rosen, an officer in Livonia, was exceedingly fond of a horse; and when he died, he left a pension for its maintenance. A lady in France left a pension for a cat. There is no actual crime in indulging these feelings; but it would be much more rational and advantageous to expend them on our fellow creatures. Brutes cannot afford us counsel or assistance in the hour of danger: they cannot impart or receive information by language; hence, there can be no sympathy between rational and irrational beings.

A species of love or interest sometimes arises by association: pleasing company makes us delighted with the room in which we have been accustomed to meet our companions; a grove appears enchanting, in which we have spent pleasant hours; a house, a stone, or a name, will sometimes awaken delightful feelings. The pilgrim visits the scenes which mark the history of the Messiah; and every object excites some powerful impression of former events. He loves the very ground on which the Saviour trod; the well of Jacob, where Christ and the Samaritan woman conversed, is more attractive than the most splendid aqueduct; the manger of the Messiah is more lovely than the birthplace of a monarch in the midst of power and splendour; the Mount of Sion, though comparatively devoid of natural beauty, is more pleasing to him, than hills covered with palaces and groves; and the holy sepulchre awakes a deeper feeling of admiration than the most magnificent mausoleum. The same reverential love is

connected, by the Mahomedan, with the scenes of Mecca and Medina.

A love of self is the grand principle of human actions ; and this exists not only in man, but in all sentient animals. Self-love is not necessarily low and unworthy ; its legitimate object is the welfare of the possessor and the general happiness of mankind. It is this feeling which prompts a person to preserve his existence ; to guard himself against excessive cold and heat ; to avoid as much as possible hunger and thirst ; to use exercise, to breathe salubrious air, to take medicine when he is sick ; which induces him to provide for himself a comfortable maintenance ; and carries him onward, on the wings of hope, from time to eternity, from the material things of earth to the unseen and immaterial existence of heaven. If self-love did not influence mankind, how would these effects be produced ? Property, body, and soul, would soon be destroyed.

Self-love may be either virtuous or vicious ; it may induce a man to perform his duty to his fellow creatures and his Creator, — believing, that the readiest way to his own happiness is through the welfare of mankind, and the favour of God ; or it may occasion him to grasp as much, and to keep as much as possible, of the tempting things of this life, its wealth, honour, and influence, and to care nothing about the interest of his fellow creatures. The latter is termed selfishness, but more properly it would be baseness ; the former is termed disinterestedness, but more correctly it would be called philanthropy and honesty.

When the course of favours does not run in one direction only — when there is an interchange of kind offices, with a mutual regard — it is friendship. Malthus observes, — “ If society be desirable, it surely must be free, equal, and reciprocal society, where benefits are conferred as well as received.” The phrase “ a friend in need ” is often used ; but if it signify the communication of a favour from a rich to a poor man, it is not friendship, but benevolence ; if it signify the assistance which one friend may give to another, the term is appropriate.

There is too much low selfishness in the conduct of mankind, and too much hypocrisy in the professions of men. For the sake of gain, they will, too frequently, do any thing ; they will lie or cheat for the purpose of gaining “ an honest penny.” They are too much like a gilded egg, which at a distance may resemble solid metal, but on a nearer inspection is found to be hollow and worthless. Every thing — honour, friendship, virtue — is sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. Friendship is often the profession of those who walk in the train of wealth and nobility ; but when these glittering attractions fade, and the shades of degradation gather around, they fly to brighter scenes and more profitable society. Goldsmith exclaims, —

“ And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep ;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
And leaves the wretch to weep.”

The exercise of a friendly and noble disposition is not only pleasing to mankind, but it is advan-

tageous to the possessor. A close-fisted, morose, illiberal person dies, and is buried — no one cares about him; while the person who entertains a good feeling towards others is treated with kindness and respect. Even Alexander of Macedon, who was a scourge to the globe, was so humane and honourable in many respects, that his death was lamented by the very people he had conquered. Of this monarch, Montesquieu exclaims,—“What a conqueror! he is lamented by all the nations he has subdued. What an usurper! at his death the very family he has cast from the throne are in tears. These were the most glorious passages in his life, and such as history cannot produce an instance of in any other warrior.” But if the uniform course of a man’s conduct be consistent with tranquillity and virtue, while it is opposed to undue ambition, how much more worthy will he be?

There are several degrees of love peculiar to various kinds of relationship; but whether these be original or acquired has been deemed a matter of question. Perhaps the same effects which arise in brutes mechanically, may spring up in man under the culture of reason. Sometimes this feeling is weak, and at other times it is too powerful. In most cases, where it runs to an extreme, it will be of short continuance; and if one member of a family be inordinately loved, it will withhold a proper regard from the rest. In families where the parents unfortunately suffer these partialities to exist, one child is spoiled by indulgence, and another by neglect. A feeling of kindness and love, without a proper degree of strictness, is injurious; and so

is much severity untempered with affection. Many a man has ruined his children by indulgence; Titus Manlius sacrificed his son for a disobedience of orders, though, in so doing, the son had obtained a victory.

Pope, in some part of his writings, intimates that a friend of his must make common cause with him in his quarrels; but nothing can be more unreasonable. In this case, his friends must be incapable of discerning, or they must be unprincipled: they must confound error with truth, and fancy that the opponent of their friend is wrong in every thing, or they must perceive that he is correct in his conduct; but in order to please their friend, they will practise hypocrisy. Unless friendship be formed on the basis of mutual merit or fancied excellence, it cannot be deemed friendship. It may be a low and selfish connection for the purpose of private advantage, but it is unworthy of a nobler name. An upright man would weigh impartially the matter of dispute between his friend and others: if he discovered that the others were correct, he would endeavour to soften his friend and settle the grievance; if he found that his friend was right, he would support him; but, if he perceived that his friend was wrong, and would not be convinced, he would have nothing to do with the quarrel, but he would condemn his friend in this respect; and if the friend acted uniformly in this manner, friendship would cease. There is an universal feeling in the human mind, which compels it to acknowledge the excellence of virtue, and to love it; while, at the same time, it will perceive

the odiousness of vice, and hate it. And this is one reason why friendship exists more commonly among worthy than among unprincipled persons.

There is also a love of a reverential kind, which naturally arises in the pious mind towards the Creator, — that Being who brought us into existence, who has favoured us with many blessings, and on whom we are dependent, not only for our hope of happiness in this life, but for our anticipation of enjoyment in a future state. This feeling is essentially different from what we give to an inferior or an equal; for God is above us, and not subject to our kindness; we have nothing which we did not receive from him, and we can give him nothing but what belongs to him. This feeling is very dissimilar to what arises between the sexes; for God is a spirit, pure and holy; and the Saviour of the world, although he be sometimes, by rapt enthusiasts, contemplated with the love which is appropriate to man, is degraded by such an offering.

The most prevailing and the most powerful kind of love, is that of the sexes; — this arises from a view of bodily or mental excellencies. The object beloved is like a magnet; and the admirer, like metal, is drawn towards it. The more violent feeling may be termed an emotion or passion; but when it becomes constant (as it always should), in a state of marriage, it is an affection or habit. There is a great deal of mystery in the workings of the human mind, and particularly when it is under the influence of this principle; but there is nothing supernatural in the influence of love; and consequently, if our perception will carry us so far,

we may explain it. In a state of nature, among uncivilised beings, love is merely sensual. Women are sometimes seized and carried off by force ; on other occasions, a plurality of wives is allowed ; in both cases, genuine love is either absent, or its influence is very small.

When a feeling of admiration and pleasure refers to the mind only, it is pure or abstract love ; but when it refers to the body, it is animal, and resembles what is felt by brutes : the union of both constitutes sexual love ; and this is the only kind which can be depended on as a guide to durable enjoyment. Bayle observes, that a man who would fall in love with a woman, and marry her for her beauty, would soon become satiated. Ben Jonson, in condemning an affection of this kind, and in alluding to the sad consequences of it, observes, —

“ True love
No such effects doth prove ;
This is an essence, far more gentle, fine,
Pure, perfect, nay, Divine ;
It is a golden chain let down from heaven,
Whose links are bright and even.”

A handsome face will seldom give the beholder an idea of mental ability ; but a cultivated mind may add a charm to the countenance, which would counteract its natural blemishes. This was the case with *Æsop* ; he was a very ugly man, but he won the heart of the fair *Rhodope*. Bodily charms are almost stationary ; they are like a painting, a statue, or a temple ; but the mind is ever varying, like the ocean, which is sometimes rolling in majestic

waves, sometimes tranquil, at one time sparkling in sun-beams, at another time covered with the shadows of evening, sometimes attracting the eye by its own loveliness, and sometimes reflecting the beauties of other parts of creation.

Love is excited by pleasing manners, by an amiable disposition, by the music of speech or song. Sometimes the feeling is produced by intrinsic excellence, and sometimes the pleasing sensations which arise from other objects are reflected on a person, and, centering there, make him or her the more attractive. Some persons have become enamoured by a mere description; and some have formed an imaginative beauty, which they have mentally worshipped. A representation of an elegant woman in marble, or on canvass, will charm the beholder. A young man among the ancients, was so much affected by an exquisite statue of Venus, that he was unable to rest except when he was gazing on it. Sometimes the reading of love will powerfully influence the mind. Possevin, a Jesuit, was so much enamoured by the love poetry of Tibullus, that he fell down on his knees, and prayed that the passion might depart from him. Sometimes the operation of love is sudden, and sometimes it is gradual; I shall endeavour to describe both.

The influence of love is universal. Mankind hear of it, and read of it, and, as they grow to maturity, they feel it. It is natural, therefore, that it should form a constant and fascinating subject for the employment of the thoughts, especially when other engagements are absent; and this is one

reason why idle persons are more subject to romantic love, than those are, who are industrious. The imagination of all persons is frequently employed in tracing out forms of beauty, and in connecting them with mental accomplishments. We imagine ourselves in the company of the beautiful and the fascinating, — delighting ourselves with smiles, listening to the strains of a melodious voice, and admiring the principles of virtue, which, like beautiful flowers peeping out from foliage, continually excite delight. Some particular form is admired, and some particular disposition is preferred; and we wait until we discover a counterpart among the sons or daughters of men. If we fail, we take some reality, and adorn it to agree with our imagination; consequently love is sometimes blind, for it fancies beauty where none exists. When a person is seen, who somewhat resembles the image which has been formed in the mind, and with which delightful feelings have been connected, and from which thoughts have arisen of failure and success, of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow, of a happy connection or a heart-breaking separation, and these burst forth in one powerful and indefinite feeling, it constitutes the sensation of sudden love, or love at first sight. Accidental circumstances contribute very much to a powerful impression — either in calling forth the previous sensations of the mind, or in decking attractively the present object of attention. There are periods when the charms of a lady, which, under ordinary circumstances, would occasion no effect, will produce a powerful impression. As the scattered rays

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strength of the feeling so will be the determinateness to win the lady, whether she be inclined or not. The desire of obtaining what we approve, if it be regulated by reason, is not to be condemned; for it could not be otherwise, according to the arrangements of the Almighty. A person, in marrying, has no right to expect a handsome fortune, if there be none brought to meet it, — unless there should be some superior qualities to counterbalance the absence of wealth; and it does not follow that he should marry one who has nothing: for the expenses of a married state require the union of two incomes, instead of a dependence on one only. Love, and a gratification of this feeling, with an elevation in society equal to what a person has been accustomed, will contribute to earthly happiness: but love and poverty, with a continual sinking, will sadden the heart and the countenance of those who are affected by them. Some think of love, and love only, when they enter into matrimony; others think of nothing but money; but love should be the primary influence, while a regard to worldly comfort should not be omitted.

The trafficking which sometimes exists among persons desirous of entering into matrimony is laughable to the cynic and disgusting to the sensible man. All kinds of deception are practised with regard to birth, property, accomplishments, dispositions, attachment, and every thing that can affect the mind of a deluded lover. But when the veil of hypocrisy is thrown aside, when the wife and husband have left the altar for their permanent dwelling, then the attractions vanish, as the

splendours of a summer's evening are lost among the shadows of night. Amiable dispositions are exchanged for pettishness, suspicion, and sulkiness ; ardent attachment for coolness or hatred ; soft words for hard language ; and thus the hapless pair go onward until one dies, and then the survivor, like an icicle in the sun's rays, is dissolved in tears.

Some people, being inclined to make the conubial engagement a complete business-like speculation, keep two or three persons continually under their influence, that if one should slip, another might be chosen ; but this would probably resemble the contention of dogs for a bone, if one leaves, the others depart ; for the contest arises from rivalry, not a love to the object, but a feeling of envy and jealousy among those who wish to obtain the prize.

If the purpose in entering matrimony be an increase of human happiness, — as it should be, — a person should practise no kind of artifice ; for a discovery will be much more injurious than any deception will be advantageous : act fairly and honourably, that the remembrance of upright and praiseworthy conduct before marriage may induce esteem after. On this subject I shall make some observations in the next chapter.

The human mind is liable to extremes, — to virtue and vice, to love and hatred. It may be adorned by philanthropy, or it may be debased by cynical feelings. Customs, dispositions, passions, and vices may be hated, distinct from the possessors ; but we are not allowed to hate any man.

We are peremptorily commanded to love even our enemies. Love will generate good will, honour, and friendship ; hatred will produce evil surmisings, discord, and disgrace. The best men are the most inclined to cherish benevolent feelings towards their fellow-creatures ; the worst are the most disposed to excite hatred. Sometimes this unhappy feeling is shown towards a few, and at other times to many. Some evince their dislike and opposition to persons in high and influential offices ; and others hate those who are obscure and poor. Females sometimes dislike males, and males hate females ; the ignorant despise the learned, and the learned the ignorant. A dislike to our fellow-creatures is shown by actions, by words, and by the expression of the countenance. Every feeling of gratification or complacency, which arises on the occurrence of disadvantage to others, is a species of hatred. The most pleasing intelligence to some men is an account of murders and battles. "The first part of a newspaper," observes Shenstone, "which an ill-tempered man examines, is the list of bankrupts and the bills of mortality." But this feeling should be checked : it will make a man hateful, and it will cause him to be hated. It will introduce discord where only harmony and love should reign,

CHAP. XX.

ON MATRIMONY AND CELIBACY.

MARRIAGE has been almost universal in every country. The first pair were united by the Almighty in Paradise, when the infant world was the temple, and the heavens were the witnesses; and the successors of Adam and Eve are influenced by the same principle, which induces them to leave parents and guardians for the purpose of forming a separate establishment and a companionship for life. No event is more important, and none is conducted, on many occasions, with less prudence. Providence has allowed the passions to exercise a powerful influence in this matter, otherwise the cares and anxieties with which it is attended would deter most persons from launching their bark of earthly happiness on the great ocean of matrimony. But too frequently the passions are the only guide, and these stimulate to bewilder: they exhibit pleasing and attractive imagery, and then the possession destroys the bliss.

In most countries a great encouragement has been given to matrimony; but this has arisen partly from political motives—from the desire of increasing the population, that the nation might be more powerful, and more capable of engaging in war. It is rather degrading to human nature that men should be

thus levelled with brutes, and deemed no more dignified than dogs or bulls, the increase of which, for the purpose of combat, would afford profit or amusement to the proprietors. Another reason for the encouragement of matrimony is the influence which it has on morality; and this is certainly a powerful motive with respect to the majority of mankind, but it is not of universal application. A difference of opinion existed as to the moral effects of matrimony among the early Christians; the Abelians, for instance, suffered no member of their sect to remain single, while the Novatians condemned marriage under every circumstance. A third argument is the increase of human happiness; and this will be the natural result, if virtue be increased and the evils of life be lessened. To this subject I shall hereafter refer.

The fashion or custom of marriage has varied in different countries. In the eastern parts of the globe polygamy has prevailed; and thus we find in the sacred Scriptures an account of Ashur, Elkanah of Mount Ephraim, Lamech, and several others, who had two wives each. We also discover many allusions to this practice, not condemnatory but favourable to it. In Deuteronomy, for instance, it is said, "If a man have two wives, one beloved," &c. In Leviticus it is commanded that no one shall take two sisters for his wives at the same time, because thereby envy and contention may be produced. In the same volume we find an account of Abijah king of Judah, who had fourteen wives; of Rehoboam, who had eighteen wives, and eighty concubines; of David, who had a great

number of both ; and of Solomon, who possessed 700 wives and 300 concubines. It has been usual in Eastern countries, from the Earliest ages, to estimate the wealth and grandeur of a king by the number of his wives ; and as there has existed no divine or human law to limit that number, no one has acted illegally in maintaining a large household. It is the same with riches in the present day : wealth beyond a certain amount is useless, except for the gratification of pride and the indulgence of luxury ; but a king is not considered criminal in possessing a more splendid residence, and more costly furniture than his subjects could boast of. Polygamy seems only to be adapted for the eastern and southern parts of the globe ; for in these countries the number of girls which are brought into existence is greater than that of boys ; whereas in Europe the males are to the females as twenty-one to twenty. It has been asserted that, at Bantam, in the island of Java, there are twice as many girls born as boys. In that country, as well as in many others, the women perform all the labour, and a company of athletic females serves as the body-guard of the king. There is another reason why polygamy may have been natural, and almost necessary, in some countries : wars were so prevalent and sanguinary, that men were not sufficiently numerous to allow of the proportion of one husband to one wife. It was customary in the taking of cities to destroy the men and spare the women. In the northern parts of the globe, then, monogamy is proper, because it seems to be required by

the New Testament, and the proportion of males to females demands it. In the southern and eastern parts of the globe polygamy was proper, because the laws allowed it, and the superfluous number of women required it. But it is questionable whether the influence of true religion, even in Eastern countries, will not, at no distant period, introduce those customs which will more equalise the sexes; and when monogamy is introduced, it will be probable, for physiological reasons, that the number of births of both sexes will be nearly equal. Polygamy is not the most favourable condition for happiness; but in countries where this custom prevails, and where it is deemed honourable, there is much more harmony than would exist in this land, where the practice is disgraceful. The disputes in one case arise between the husband and wife, in the other case between one wife and another. A Mahomedan who would beat his wife would be deemed an unprincipled fellow: there seems to be no reason why the same judgment should not be passed on those who practise this vice in our own country.

The laws of the Romans did not prohibit polygamy; but it was never practised until Marc Antony set the example. It was introduced and allowed in the early ages of the Christian church, but it was soon prohibited. There have been some particular cases in latter times where a plurality of wives has been suffered. Luther allowed Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, to have two wives; and one of the popes granted a dispensation of a similar kind to Count Gleichen of Germany. The

story is related by Bayle. The count was taken prisoner and carried into Turkey, where he was kept in a state of slavery. One day the daughter of his master, a beautiful woman, met him in one of the gardens, and asked him several questions. She was so much pleased with his answers, that she visited him again; and novelty threw around both its fascinations, so that they became delighted with each other. She told him that she would procure his liberty, and go with him to his native land, for she was tired of her present abode, on one condition,—which was rather implied than expressed,—that he would marry her. But he was unfortunately obliged to answer that he had a wife and several children. That is no objection, she replied, for we allow a man to have several wives. The count resolved to make the agreement, and to run every risk for the result. He became free; and he conducted the Turkish lady to his home. His former wife treated the foreigner with much kindness, because she had restored her husband: they agreed to live peaceably together; and the pope granted a special dispensation for the second marriage.

In some countries there have been several husbands for one wife. And really, as men and women are equal in many respects,—in intellect, if it be improved; in corporeal strength, if the muscular power be brought into early action; in disposition and in virtue; and as females are superior in the gift of tongues, there seems to be no reason why there should not be a superiority of privilege on the side of the wife in some countries, as there

is on that of the husband in others. It is said that, in the northern part of China, a woman may have several husbands at the same time. And the Nairs, or noble ladies among the Malabars, are allowed to have from one to twelve husbands. Every husband resides in a separate dwelling, at a small distance from the lady; and on one particular day in the week the whole family dine together.

Without doubt, the most favourable custom for human happiness is the union of one husband with one wife; and this law, as it relates more particularly to ourselves, "is," as Montesquieu observes, "physically conformable to the climate of Europe." Very severe penalties have been inflicted on those men who have broken down the rules of custom and decency in this part of the globe, by taking a plurality of wives. In Sweden, and some other countries, it has been punished with death.

The period for marriage has varied very much in different parts of the world. Among the Agows of Abyssinia (says Bruce) the women are married at the early age of eleven. In America, marriages are frequently contracted at fourteen. In the East, it is not unusual for a woman to be inducted into the bonds of matrimony, or concubinage, at twelve or thirteen. But among the Gauls it was reckoned disgraceful to be married early. The Germans possessed a feeling of a similar kind. In Europe generally, among the more respectable classes, marriage is rather late. Aristotle thought the proper period for matrimony among men was thirty-seven; and among women eighteen. Plato recommended thirty for males, and twenty for

females. The latter is preferable, both with regard to the period and the proportion.

A similar variation has existed with respect to the object of a matrimonial choice. In some countries almost all relatives have been allowed to intermarry; and in other parts, only the more distant have been suffered to be joined in matrimony. The ancient Persians were accustomed sometimes to marry their own mothers, and the Tartars to marry their daughters; but these practices are disgusting to a modern and civilised taste. The Romish religion, on the other hand, prevents even cousins from marrying, although a dispensation from the pope has sometimes joined together those who were much more nearly connected.

Among the Samnites a matrimonial contract was regulated by merit. All the boys and girls, of a particular district, were examined as to their conduct, and the best lad was allowed to choose what lass he pleased; the second best was allowed to come next, and so on. Plato observes, in his Republic, that if it were possible to join males and females together, with reference to their mutual adaptation, rather than their own inclination, — which, in early life particularly, is frequently unreasonable and erroneous, — it would contribute very much to the comfort and harmony of society. Socrates advised, that as matrimonial contracts are generally made by choice, they should be entered into with a great deal of caution. Love produces a feeling of happiness, and happiness produces love. If an union be so appropriate as to contribute to the enjoyment of the persons concerned,

it will generate affection; but it is more natural for love to take the lead; and if prudence be allowed to exercise its influence, all other virtues will follow in their proper order.

In some cases a feeling of affection has been preceded by sensations of a very different kind. The founders of Rome wanted wives, but the neighbouring nations would enter into no connection with them; the Romans, therefore, instituted a splendid festival in honour of the gods, and invited the Sabines to attend it. When the strangers were in the midst of their revelry, a certain number of armed Romans burst in upon them, and carried off a great many of their women. The female strangers were, without doubt, as much incensed as the men at this flagrant treachery; but they soon became reconciled to their husbands: and when the Sabine army came to punish the Romans the Sabine women went out to meet them, and to plead the cause of their husbands. By the intercession of these faithful females the city was preserved. But, in any case, even if the husband and wife should not agree, it would be dangerous to intermeddle with them; for, as soon as their anger is over, the feeling of love arises so powerfully, that they will support each other even against those who had been persuaded to advocate one side.

Love is a pleasing but exciting passion. The eye is delighted by form, manners, and the expression of the features, the ear by musical language, while the imagination paints future joys; all of which contribute to one great principle, that of receiving happiness from those we love, and evincing

love for those from whom we derive our happiness. As the crystal streams are absorbed by the sun, and distributed as brilliant clouds in the heavens, and then fall and run in their accustomed channels, and thus the rivers supply the clouds, and the vapours the rivers, so is the interchange between love and happiness. This will agree with the opinion that love may be occasioned suddenly, because enjoyment is expected; or it may arise gradually, because the unattractiveness which first existed may be succeeded by attraction.

There was no appointment by nature of particular persons for each other; but we may expect among a great variety of occurrences to meet with some singular and astonishing coincidences. Human beings appear to be left in this respect, as in many others, to their own judgment. If they act discreetly they enjoy the comfort of it; but if otherwise, they bring upon themselves a disadvantage. If marriage were regulated by the Supreme Being, we should have fewer unhappy matches; each person would be exactly appropriate for his companion. If there could be (as Plato has observed), among the human family, some regulation which would appoint kindred minds for each other, and regulate property and comforts, love would soon spring up, and blossom, and bring forth much enjoyment. If a person possess a discreet mind and be not ruled by passion, he may make a prudent choice; but how small is the number of prizes in the great lottery of matrimony! People enter into it rashly: one man is besotted with wine, and another with music, and another knows not

the odiousness of vice, and hate it. And this is one reason why friendship exists more commonly among worthy than among unprincipled persons.

There is also a love of a reverential kind, which naturally arises in the pious mind towards the Creator, — that Being who brought us into existence, who has favoured us with many blessings, and on whom we are dependent, not only for our hope of happiness in this life, but for our anticipation of enjoyment in a future state. This feeling is essentially different from what we give to an inferior or an equal; for God is above us, and not subject to our kindness; we have nothing which we did not receive from him, and we can give him nothing but what belongs to him. This feeling is very dissimilar to what arises between the sexes; for God is a spirit, pure and holy; and the Saviour of the world, although he be sometimes, by rapt enthusiasts, contemplated with the love which is appropriate to man, is degraded by such an offering.

The most prevailing and the most powerful kind of love, is that of the sexes; — this arises from a view of bodily or mental excellencies. The object beloved is like a magnet; and the admirer, like metal, is drawn towards it. The more violent feeling may be termed an emotion or passion; but when it becomes constant (as it always should), in a state of marriage, it is an affection or habit. There is a great deal of mystery in the workings of the human mind, and particularly when it is under the influence of this principle; but there is nothing supernatural in the influence of love; and consequently, if our perception will carry us so far,

we may explain it. In a state of nature, among uncivilised beings, love is merely sensual. Women are sometimes seized and carried off by force; on other occasions, a plurality of wives is allowed; in both cases, genuine love is either absent, or its influence is very small.

When a feeling of admiration and pleasure refers to the mind only, it is pure or abstract love; but when it refers to the body, it is animal, and resembles what is felt by brutes: the union of both constitutes sexual love; and this is the only kind which can be depended on as a guide to durable enjoyment. Bayle observes, that a man who would fall in love with a woman, and marry her for her beauty, would soon become satiated. Ben Jonson, in condemning an affection of this kind, and in alluding to the sad consequences of it, observes, —

“ True love

No such effects doth prove ;

This is an essence, far more gentle, fine,

Pure, perfect, nay, Divine ;

It is a golden chain let down from heaven,

Whose links are bright and even.”

A handsome face will seldom give the beholder an idea of mental ability; but a cultivated mind may add a charm to the countenance, which would counteract its natural blemishes. This was the case with *Æsop*; he was a very ugly man, but he won the heart of the fair *Rhodope*. Bodily charms are almost stationary; they are like a painting, a statue, or a temple; but the mind is ever varying, like the ocean, which is sometimes rolling in majestic

effects do not always arise, where is the fault? Which is better, or more worthy, the male or the female sex? This is rather a difficult question; and let the palm of superior merit be awarded to either, the imputation of prejudice would be connected with the decision. But fortunately there is little difference: one varies from the other in particular qualities: but if the aggregate of merit be taken in each, the amount will not differ much. Education forms the principal variation: men are instructed in the more active and laborious employments, women in the more sedentary and domestic. Dr. Southey says, that "if women are not formed of finer clay, there has been more of the dew of heaven to temper it." Richard Flecknoe, a contemporary with Dryden, observes of the female sex, — "I have always been conversant with the best and worthiest in all places where I came; and among the rest with ladies, in whose conversation, as in an academy of virtue, I learnt nothing but goodness, and saw nothing but nobleness." It must be granted, that women in general possess more of the sweetness and softness of human nature, while men are endowed with more vigorous virtues; women are gifted with more fortitude, and men with more valour. There have been some eminent examples of worthy women. It was said of Isabella de Gonzaga, wife to the Duke of Urbino, that "she was a woman, for her goodness, integrity, and nobleness, more divine than human." Plutarch records, that of all the female inhabitants of Chios, not one of them, in the space of seven hundred years, disgraced her sex. And yet, in

one of the ancient councils, it was proposed as a question of doubt, "Whether women were human creatures or not?" and, after a long debate, the question was decided in favour of their humanity. One of the volumes that John Knox published, was entitled, "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the monstrous Regiment of Women." There have been some who, having been ignorant and degraded themselves, have endeavoured to lower the character and acquirements of females. Francis Duke of Britany said, that a woman would be sufficiently skilful and learned if she were capable of distinguishing her husband's shirt from his doublet. The Lacedemonians considered their wives as an inferior order of beings. In all barbarous countries, females have been badly treated; which shows very clearly that women are under great obligations to civilisation for the comforts which they enjoy; and that, in the same proportion as men are ruled by reason rather than brutality, the female character will engage their esteem. What woman, then, would be an opposer of mental improvement? and what female is there who would not employ her influence for the further dissemination of useful knowledge? Useful knowledge benefits mankind; but trash, such as wild romances, immoral and atheistical publications, are the curse of domestic and civil enjoyment. Some men have possessed a mortal hatred to the female sex; but these have been hateful themselves, or they have been unfortunately connected only with some of the worst specimens of the sex; or they have been disappointed in their expectations;

or they have been so much engaged in the rougher and more brutalising engagements of this life, that they have had no susceptibility for finer feelings. Of the latter kind were Marshal de Turenne and Marshal de Gassion, who were violent haters of women. Father Spiga, a Jesuit, was so much averse to the sex, that he would never look on a woman, nor continue in a house with a female, except there were other company present. Although he was confessor to his nieces and several others, he scarcely knew them from strangers. St. Augustine would hold no conversation with a woman, and would suffer none to enter his house. Lucretia Marinella, as Bayle observes, advocated the cause of her sex in an ingenious work, entitled "The Excellency and Nobleness of Women, with the Defects and Faults of the Men." There was a work published in Paris in 1643, entitled "The generous Woman, who proves that her Sex is more noble, more politic, more valiant, more learned, more virtuous, and more frugal than the Men." But this is saying rather too much. One extreme, however, frequently occasions another. When men have been exalted, and women have been degraded by some authors, it is not unnatural that the balance should be turned in the opposite direction by others. Madame de Gournay did better: she wrote a work on the "Equality of Men and Women." Females have sometimes been spoilt in education, and sometimes in marriage; and thus many among them have been foolish and inconstant in their youth, and in middle life they have made themselves unhappy, while they

have changed worthy men into bad husbands. A similar accusation may be brought against the male sex, with respect to their conduct towards females. This brings us now to consider the character and advantages of a married state.

Dr. Jeremy Taylor has said, — “Marriage hath in it the labour of love, and the delicacies of friendship; the blessings of society, and the union of hands and hearts.” Cowper has also alluded to the advantages of a matrimonial settlement, —

“O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural leisure pass’d.”

Marriage is frequently an union of interest: the happiness of one is made a source of enjoyment to the other. It is for life, because it is most agreeable with the inclination of mankind that friendship, esteem, and love should be permanent. In this instance, a continuance of the union constitutes no small part of the bliss. The expectation of a durable connection makes men careful, otherwise they would marry and unmarry every week. There is, by the arrangement of the Almighty, a comparative power or influence vested in the man, because, agreeably with all good government, —

“Some are, and must be, greater than the rest;”

but then, as Dr. Beattie observes, “the superiority vested by law in the man is compensated to the woman by that superior complaisance which is paid them by every man who aspires to elegance of

manners." And besides this, the husband has frequently the nominal, while the wife has the actual power : —

“ Like as the helme doth rule the shippe,”

so she regulates all the household affairs. This is proper, when the husband allows it ; and he ought to do so, when his wife is capable of managing these things : but when the inclinations of his Eve run perversely, when he is conscious that he has reason on his side, and she only folly, and yet he is vacillating and yielding, he is unmanly and inconsistent ; he sacrifices future happiness to present peace. Every woman, it must be granted, is not a sensible one ; and “ there is nothing,” as Lord Burleigh observed to his son, “ more fulsome than a she foole.” If Socrates had properly controlled his Xantippe before her disorder had increased beyond cure, it would have contributed to her happiness and his own. Prince Eugene observed, on one occasion, rather satirically, that love was a mere amusement, and calculated for nothing more than to enlarge the influence of the woman, and abridge the power of the man. Goldsmith’s Hermit said to his lovely visiter, —

“ And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one’s jest ;
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle’s nest.”

But love is an actual, a powerful, and a beneficial principle, if it be properly regulated. Among married persons there ought to be as much love as would induce either to yield in trifling matters ;

and there ought to be as much reason as would enable both to act correctly. Matrimony should be something like the union of the ivy and the oak: the latter is firm, and capable of supporting its more tender companion; the ivy, however, must follow in some measure the humours and windings of the oak; but they grow together, and the longer they continue the more closely they are united. There have been many instances of great attachment. Porcia, the wife of Brutus, when she heard of her husband's death swallowed burning coals, that she might go with him. Alceste, wife of Admetus king of Thessaly, sacrificed herself for the safety of her husband. This monarch was ill; and when the oracle was consulted, it was declared that he would not recover except some friend would die for him; and as no one else would do so, the wife heroically drank a cup of poison. Paulina, the wife of Seneca in his old age, was young, beautiful, and accomplished; and she was so much attached to her husband, that when the veins of Seneca were opened by the command of Nero, she caused her own to be cut, that she also might bleed to death. When Conrad III. had taken the town of Winsberg in Bavaria, he allowed only the women to go out; but they had leave to carry with them as much as they pleased. They loaded themselves, therefore, with their husbands and children, and brought them all out on their shoulders! When love is genuine; when professions are sincere, and the practice agreeable therewith; when health is enjoyed, and as many comforts as are necessary for this life; when children grow up in

vigour, good behaviour, and mental improvement; when old age is solaced by the company of each other, and the kind attention of daughters and sons; then matrimony is a cause of happiness.

But if all these enjoyments were the lot of every married person, men would become too much contented with the present life, and they would scarcely think, as they sail on smoothly, of the haven for which they are bound. Besides, the fascinations of domestic life would attract them from many duties which they owe to their fellow-creatures. There are then many disadvantages connected with matrimony. There is so much ignorance, perverseness, undue inclination for power, disposition to contradict, anger, jealousy, hatred, and versatility among human beings, that many unpleasant occurrences will necessarily arise, and especially in the marriage state, because here most of these feelings are brought into action, and are most sensibly felt by those who are subject to their influence. He that paints the experience of human life in brilliant colours only gives a flattering and deceptive representation, — he may just as well pretend that the heavens are always cloudless. People soon discover that there are sorrows in the world as well as joys, unpleasant as well as pleasant events; hence arises the advantage of examining, of pointing out, and endeavouring to avoid “the ills which flesh is heir to.” The perpetuity of marriage, under pleasing circumstances, is its most lovely character; but the same peculiarity, under a different aspect, is its principal source of misery. It is too frequently a state of bondage, “which

thousands once fast chained to quit no more." But what exists, and cannot be removed, should always be borne as patiently as possible; and thus we may keep a cheerful heart, when another, less prudent, would be gloomy. Besides, an ill temper makes every condition of life unhappy; a cheerful disposition will throw a gleam of sunshine over the scenery of a November day. Some people, very foolishly, make themselves uneasy because they are bound. Sir Jonah Barrington seems to think it a natural propensity. He says,—"The moment any two animals, however fond before, are fastened together by a chain they cannot break, they begin to quarrel without any apparent reason, and peck each other solely because they cannot get loose again." But it must be remembered that people enter into marriage with a knowledge of the permanency of the union, and perhaps they seldom repent, except they had been deceived; and this we may hope would not occur frequently. After the Romans had introduced a law of divorce, no respectable person, for the space of forty years, availed himself of it. Divorcement was much practised among the Jews, and was productive of great evil. One of the Jewish doctors asserted, that if a man beheld a woman who was handsomer than his wife, he might put away his wife and marry her; and thus all the wives in Judea, except the handsomest, might have been divorced. Josephus observes, on one occasion, very coolly,—“About this time I put away my wife, who had borne me three children, not being pleased with her manners.”

One cause of unhappiness in a married state, is too little affection; and in other instances, although affection may be possessed, it is not shown. Montesquieu observes, "that women commonly reserve their love for their husbands until their husbands are dead." Sometimes a mortal hatred springs up, which induces a man, like Henry VIII., to cause the murder of those whom he has sworn to love and preserve; or a woman, like Livia, to poison her husband. Not only is a great dissimilarity of rank and condition a cause of dislike, but a great variation in age is frequently the cause of distrust and unhappiness. The proportion which Aristotle suggests may be appropriate in one respect, but it is objectionable in others. The life of the female is just as long as that of the male; and the union of middle age and youth, where the one is twice as old as the other, will not often allow an uniformity of feelings and disposition. The case of Seneca (to which I have alluded), and that of Sir Matthew Hale, are exceptions. Youth is generally gay, thoughtless, and frivolous; but life, in more advanced periods, is sober, thoughtful, and dignified. A husband should not be deemed a teacher or guardian for the wife so much as a companion; and the wife should not be considered a guardian for the husband: there ought to be a mutual sympathy, and in most respects an equality of influence.

Jealousy is a passion which allows the hapless possessor to enjoy neither rest nor confidence. It is frequently the companion of love. Shakspeare says, —

" For where love reigns, disturbing jealousy
Doth call himself affection's sentinel."

When this principle obtains possession of the breast, it destroys the health and spirits; the streams which gladden the heart become corrupted, and productive of rage or melancholy. Jealousy is like the snake which insidiously entwines itself around its victim; or like the *bohun upas* of Java, which diffuses death. The bright beams of hope, which cheered the possessor, and carried his vision to distant days and distant scenes of enjoyment, are all eclipsed by this pillar of darkness. Molière the poet was endowed with an eminent genius—he was esteemed as the first wit in Europe; but his wife was faithless, and no enjoyment, or success, or honour could tranquillise his mind, and make him happy. The attractions of youth and beauty will sometimes excite an illicit passion, but the indulgence of this feeling is the path to anxiety and degradation. The female may be less faulty, but she will be the greater sufferer; for, with regard to her lawful companion, confidence is changed to timidity, love to hypocrisy, and a continual fear torments her, lest accident or malice should discover her imprudence. How dearly is the pleasure of a moment procured, when it is purchased by years of unhappiness! On the other hand, it is extremely unreasonable for some persons to indulge, as they do, their natural disposition of suspicion, and thus make others uneasy. Where virtue only exists, it is a most grievous hardship that the possessor should be subject to the penalty of vice. Nothing should be made with more

caution than a decision in which the innocent may receive the odium which belongs to the guilty.

Sometimes the worst sort of accomplishments are brought by a lady into the marriage state. She may be capable of singing admirably, of dancing, of painting, of performing skilfully on the harp or piano, of making ingenious trinkets and ornaments; all this may be well enough for an unmarried lady, but of what use are they in a state of matrimony? It is true, that if she be favoured with a handsome fortune, she may indulge herself agreeably with her inclination, and employ others to manage her household affairs; but not many are thus situated: and, even in this case, there are duties which belong to the wife, in regard to her husband and children, which would occupy pretty much of her time. It is still worse if she be fond of dissipation, — of routs, balls, and masquerading; if she fly abroad in pursuit of a phantom, while domestic enjoyment is neglected. A good wife will endeavour to make herself happy at home, and she will try to make all at home happy. She should endeavour to make the pathway of life cheerful by her smiles and attention, so that her husband may be delighted with his dwelling, and find it his happiest place; and that the children may be regulated with all necessary care.

A good temper is essential for matrimonial happiness. An habitually irritable or gloomy disposition is a source of misery to the possessor and to others. A dark and murky cave could as well throw out a cheerful lustre, as a surly person communicate happiness to those around him. Ob-

stinacy must not be indulged by either party ; for, as the bond of union cannot be easily broken, if one be perverse the other must bend. If two trees be bound tightly together, and both be stiff, the cords will probably break ; if not immediately, they will when the cords become weaker : and thus with regard to matrimony, what God has joined together, the perversity of human beings will put asunder. Obstinacy in trifling matters in the marriage state is an evidence of little love and a bad heart ; but if trifling matters appear important, and the gaining of every point be as the taking of a citadel, the person is wrong in his judgment ; he is insane, or partially so. Many worthy women have been cursed with worthless husbands ; but, unfortunately, the grievances of the female sex have been less frequently known than those of the men ; for women are not often authors, and men are frequently so ; consequently, in all estimates of the comparative merit of the sexes, it must be remembered that more has been said on the one side than on the other. Home, however, is the castle of the wife, if she be a good one ; here she keeps her permanent abode, agreeably with the injunction of St. Paul. The husband is absent the principal part of his time, may there not therefore, on some occasions, be too great an inclination in the lady to consider herself as the governor of the establishment, while the husband may be deemed a visiter, rather than the master ? This would not arise in the breast of an amiable and affectionate wife, but it has sometimes arisen ; for, unfortunately, all wives have not been good ones. Jerome Cardan was so unfor-

tunate as to have a wife who was proverbial for her ill temper and arbitrary conduct. John Knox said of Lord Erskine, "He has a very Jezebel to his wife." Salmasius, the opponent of Milton, was made perpetually uneasy by a similar thorn. The unfortunate husband was a Frenchman, and Milton said (as Dr. Johnson observes), "*Tu es Gallus, et, ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus.*" Milton himself seems to have suffered from a similar cause, for he evinces so much hostility to the female sex, that no other reason would so naturally account for it. He exclaims,

" O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and not fill the world at once
With men as angels without feminine?"

Milton adds a great deal more, which, if he had a high opinion of woman, even his anxiety to make his character of Adam consistent would not have demanded. An amiable temper on the part of a wife, with her own natural softness, and an inclination to yield in unimportant matters, will not only increase love, but power; for in this respect, agreeably to the opinion of Prince Eugene, love is power.

Marriage is sometimes made a matter of mere convenience; people enter into it with as much indifference as they would into any other speculation, and when one companion dies they take another. In the book of Tobit we have an account of Sara, the daughter of Raguel, who had been

favoured with seven husbands, whom "Asmodeus the evil spirit had killed." Love must be exceedingly pliable, it must be love to man, and not to a man, that would suffer a woman to transfer her affections seven times. It would be a ludicrous occurrence, if, upon any particular occasion, a man's three or four wives, or a woman's three or four husbands, should "burst their cerements," and visit their former dwelling. What astonishment! What uplifted hands and distended eyeballs! What speechlessness and violent speeches, — reproaches and animosities! When the Duke of Rutland was Viceroy of Ireland, Sir John Hamilton attended one of his Grace's levees. "This is timely rain," said the Duke, "it will bring every thing above ground."—"I hope not, my Lord," replied Sir John, "for I have three wives there." Marriage may be well extended to two wives or two husbands in succession; this, in some cases, is necessary; but when it goes to three or four it is objectionable. The man who moves from place to place, sometimes living here and sometimes there, will never gain a pure and ardent love of home; by the same rule, a succession of wives will only induce an habitual or mechanical regard to the wife for the time being; in the same way as loyalty may be transferred from one sovereign to another. Besides, a family with different degrees of relationship and with different interests is formed, and this contributes nothing towards domestic tranquillity. There may be some particular cases in which the evils to which I have alluded may not arise; these may be deemed exceptions.

There are some sorrows peculiar to matrimony ; and some which, though they fall on other conditions of life, are felt more heavily when they intrude themselves within the boundary of connubial love. Poverty and sickness are more grievous evils under circumstances of this sort ; because a man feels not only for himself, but for others. How dreadful must it be when the husband beholds his wife in squalid misery ! What are the feelings of a mother when she sees her innocent children suffering from hunger ? And when the iron hand of affliction presses upon the brow of a husband or a wife, and the sharp arrows of pain occasion groans, is there not an almost equal anguish in the breast of an affectionate partner ? And when the heavy clouds of sorrow gather around at the anticipated separation of those who had lived in the bonds of harmony—when the chilly arms of death are held out to clasp him, or her, who had been used to a more tender embrace, how dreadful is that period ! Is not the woe of separating generally in the same proportion as the bliss of uniting ? And is it not a valuable loan to be paid by a mighty sacrifice ?

Unhappiness may be occasioned by indulging an undue degree of love. Sentimental bliss is generally followed by sentimental sorrow ; consequently, people may love one another too ardently, so as to make the thought of parting a source of misery. If two plants grow up together, imparting to each other shelter and fragrance, it may contribute to their mutual advantage ; but if they become so closely united as to grow from the same stalk, and

depend on the same nutriment, then take away one, and both will perish. Connubial love should, therefore, be regulated by reason. Extremes are seldom durable. Violent love in the marriage state may change to hatred; and an unusual quantity expended on the husband or wife, may occasion a lesser degree of regard towards others. It is not an uncommon event for external enemies to occasion harmony at home; and harmony at home, or the yielding to the foolish notions of each other, may occasion enemies without. So difficult is it to act consistently, and to live in peace with all men! But the Scripture demands it, and we have a long period for studying our lesson.

In matrimony it is necessary that many things should contribute to a permanency of enjoyment. A good temper on both sides; property enough to supply the wants of a family; good health; children—not too many, nor too few, nor all of one sex; a continuance in each other's society, till both pass away gradually as the twilight into darkness: but, if chilly poverty exert its influence; if the husband or the wife be ill-tempered; if he or she be unfaithful or jealous; if love be followed by hatred; if one be taken, and the other be left in solitude; if children be imperfect in birth, or habitually sickly, or drop off in early years as unripe fruit; if sons prove vicious, and daughters bring disgrace on themselves and their families; if the extravagance of children bring their aged parents in sorrow to the grave; where, then, will be the pleasures of matrimony? The cares of a family, when the family is large and unruly, are more per-

plexing than the cares of a state. Cardan confessed, that out of four great troubles which he had experienced, two arose from his children. When Thales was asked why he did not marry, he replied, "Because I want no children." One of the ancient sages was so much impressed with the disappointments and anxieties of matrimony, that when he was asked, at what time a man should marry? replied, "If he be young, not yet; if older, not at all."

From a consideration of matrimony, it will be natural to pass to celibacy. Love is a natural feeling; Milton makes it a virtue: and the state of marriage is consistent with the arrangements of the Most High; most people, therefore, will enter the circle of matrimony. Those who continue in a single condition, are regulated by necessity or reason. Marriage is optional. Under some circumstances those who marry do well; and under others, those who marry not, do better. If reason be the guide, a state of celibacy may be a happy one — agreeably to the opinion of some, who derive celibacy from the words *cæli beatitudo*, the blessedness of heaven; but if disappointment tear away the affections from a beloved object, and leave the feelings mangled — "the sport of winds and waves" — no happiness can be expected. If unavoidable circumstances prevent the occurrence of marriage, a person will probably long for it the more; if there be no obstacle, and he chooses his condition, he will probably be content. In Europe and in Asia monasteries and nunneries have proved an important check to marriage. These establishments

contain two descriptions of persons: those who are displeased with the customs of society, with men, or the female sex — and those who are influenced by feelings of duty; the former will frequently be unhappy, though the latter may be contented.

Marriage is better for those who are engaged throughout a certain portion of the day, while the rest (a considerable part) is unoccupied by any interesting pursuit. Such persons are liable to run into dissipation and vice. Nothing is better for men who have idle time than domestic engagements; they form a part of the most pleasing, most dignified, and most natural pursuits of human life. The company of a wife, the smiles and playfulness of children, are a source of pleasing relaxation. A man of business, or a professional man, not particularly engaged in scientific or literary pursuits, and a person disengaged from business, are two classes that ought to marry. The mechanic and the labourer, if they can by any means maintain a family, will do well to be married; by this means they may avoid much loneliness, gloominess, irregularity, and vice. In this case he that hath a wife (to use Solomon's words without any qualification as to the goodness of a wife) possesses a good thing.

But if a person be capable of employing all his leisure time in useful and interesting pursuits, and pursuits which are unfailing, he has not the same occasion to be anxious about marrying. Indeed, when a taste for knowledge runs to an excess, he ought to remain single. In general, however, when the pursuits of science become a man's daily engage-

ment, and in some respects his labour, he ought to be married; for he needs a relaxation, and none is better than the pleasures of a family. If science be his relaxation, he will, perhaps, have little leisure or inclination for another. As there is, in some persons, a powerful disposition for marriage, which ought to be gratified, so there is in others such an ardent love of liberty, such a disposition to remain unfettered and unwed, that those who feel it may consistently continue single. Bishop Kenn used to make a vow every morning that he would not be married that day; and this he continued to do till the end of his life. It is stated in the biography of Bayle, that this singular man might have married a young and beautiful lady, who possessed a large fortune, with an amiable disposition and winning manners; and Bayle himself was almost fascinated by her; but he magnanimously broke through every trammel, and devoted himself to learning and celibacy. Joseph Scaliger evinced a disposition of a similar kind. If these men had married, perhaps, like Budæus and Turnebus — who scarcely suffered the wedding-day to abridge their accustomed studies — they would have thought more about their learning than their wives. But those who are married ought not, in general, to be like those who are unmarried; they should pay a constant and marked attention to their fair companions. Unmarried men have more leisure than those who are married. "Wife and children," observes Lord Bacon, "are a great impediment to great enterprises." Among the ancient Gauls it was reckoned disgraceful for a

warrior to marry. The origin of celibacy among priests, and many who held learned offices, was well intended; and was, perhaps, agreeable with the duties of their important stations. Among the fathers of the early Christian church, even before the law of celibacy was introduced, almost all the most eminent were unmarried men; among these were Clement, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Origen, with a host of others. One half of the most eminent persons that have ever lived in the world of science and literature have remained unmarried. "The best works," remarks Lord Bacon, "and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from unmarried or childless men." A feeling of independence has sometimes gone so far as to make a man completely undecided. The celebrated Allatius would neither marry nor enter into the priestly office; when Pope Alexander VII. asked him the reason, he replied, "I refuse orders, because I may be at liberty to marry; and I refuse marriage, because I may be at liberty to become a priest."

In the connubial state, too frequently, the sympathies are concentrated within the family circle; while there is little generosity or philanthropy beyond. Some of the worthiest men, in regard to benevolence and good feeling, have led a single life. "Unmarried men," observes Lord Bacon, "are best friends, best masters, and best servants." They possess many natural excellences, which, if not engrossed by a family, will be directed towards their fellow-creatures. Dr. Jeremy Taylor says: — "Celibacy, like a fly in the heart of an apple,

dwells in perpetual sweetness;" but the same eloquent writer observes: "it sits alone, and is confined." This, however, is not so correct, for a man need not be alone, when he can have the whole world for his company. But, it will be said, we hear continual complaints of the evils of celibacy from those who have felt them; but we hear nothing of the disadvantage of marriage from those who have tried the matrimonial state. This is true; but there is a sufficient reason for it. If a man be married, and if he be a prudent man, he will not often complain, for he cannot easily alter his condition; but if he be foolish, and lament his fate, and blame his companion, he will be despised. For it will be said, the man was a fool, he had no sagacity, he could not see where he was going; or, he is a poor chicken-hearted dupe to be ruled by a woman. And if he happen to be deceived, if his wife be unfaithful, there is almost as much contempt for the man as there is odium for the woman. Men, therefore, if they have any sense, will not complain. But if a man be single he may complain; for he may generally alter his condition; consequently, he is not deemed so unfortunate, and he is not treated with contempt; for the fact is, that people will not only avoid unhappiness, but they will shun those who are unhappy, especially if they cannot be relieved. A married man, therefore, feels more than he expresses; a single man, in many instances, expresses more than he feels. It is said that Shenstone and Thomson lamented the solitude of celibacy, but they were crossed in love, not by the objects of their attachment, but

by death. A palace would be a prison if a man were confined in it against his will. Dr. Johnson said, in his later days, — “I want every comfort; my life is very solitary and very cheerless.” But that is rather an argument against matrimony; the Doctor had been accustomed to a different state; and, besides this, he was almost always in pain, and he was never a contented man. From the great multitude of single persons, we must take those who have been compelled to endure that condition; and then compare others who have chosen it, with those who have chosen matrimony; and we shall discover, whether the quantity of happiness in the former, in proportion to the number, be not equal to that in the latter.

Marriage may be productive of great enjoyment or great sorrow, and so may celibacy. Matrimony is better for some persons and some conditions, celibacy is better for others. But happiness, in all cases, depends greatly on ourselves. There is, however, a great deal of querulousness among human beings; they find themselves uneasy, and as they must attribute it to something, they cast the blame on their state rather than their conduct; therefore, when Socrates was asked, whether it were better for a man to be married or single, he replied, — “Let him do either, he will repent of it.”

PART VI.

CHAP. I.

THE NATURE OF LIBERTY AND SLAVERY.

A GOOD government is to the state what health is to the body; if the functions of both are well regulated great advantages will follow. Liberty is the result of salutary laws; it does not exist in a state of barbarism, for a savage is dependent on himself; and, instead of being subject to a government, he is the slave of a thousand evils; nor does it exist in a despotic state, because the subjects of a despot are slaves; they are mere dependants on a tyrant. True liberty is the restriction of the individual for the good of the community, and the regulation of the community for the benefit of the individual. The subject is required to fulfil certain duties, he must give a portion of his property and services; while, in return, his safety is secured, and his family is established in peace. This is the origin and the character of a just law. "*Legis virtus est,*" observes Zouch, "*imperare, vetare, permittere, punire.*" To be without law is tyranny; to refine or alter the laws so as to make them, if possible, free from coercion, destroys their influence, and occasions anarchy.

Liberty is one of the greatest blessings which can be enjoyed by man. Its influence on human nature is like the enlivening power of the sun on vegetation. If a plant be confined to some dark and narrow place, where it has scarcely room to expand its branches and unfold its leaves, it becomes feeble, it throws forth no brilliant flowers, no grateful perfumes, its leaves are pale, and though it lives, it is "dead more than half." Under the influence of a wise and just government the people are prosperous and happy — under the rule of a tyrant they are squalid and miserable. Freedom with poverty is incomparably better than luxury with tyranny. "It is better," observes Bishop Watson in one of his letters, "to bask in the sun, and suck a fortuitous sustenance from the scanty drippings of the most barren rock in Switzerland with freedom for my friend, than to batten as a slave at the most luxurious table of the greatest despot on the globe." Cowper exclaims : —

" O could I worship aught beneath the skies
That earth hath seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.
Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of morning shed a dawning light ;
Again, when evening in her sober vest
Drew the gay curtain of the fading west ;
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,
For the chief blessings of my fairest days."

Government is necessary for man ; for the object of government is only to increase the hap-

piness of human beings. The primitive form is that of a family, where the parent presides ; but when families unite and form a tribe, some one who is endowed with superior ability, experience, and virtue, is chosen as the principal or chief. If the tribe increase, and become a great nation, the same kind of government would be termed monarchical. But the question would be, among so many persons, who was the most skilful, and who was the most virtuous ? Some would contend for this man, and others for that ; and thus wars would arise and devastate the country. To avoid this disadvantage, monarchy must be hereditary. But a king may be born a fool ; in this case he must have guardians, or a regency must be appointed until the imbecile monarch dies, or the heir be capable of taking the reins of government. Or the ruler may be tyrannical and unjust ; he may break down salutary laws, and make others for the countenance of his vices ; then he must be restricted or deposed. The king is not superior to the laws any more than subjects are. The people are the support of the monarch, and the monarch is the support of the people : there is an equality of dependency and benefit. Hooker has compared the king and the people to a man and his wife. The man has power over the female, and so has the ruler over the subject ; but as an improper course of conduct may occasion a divorce, so the same may occur with kings and the inhabitants of kingdoms. " Monarchy," observes Selden, " is an office which people choose for their own sake." The many are not for the few or the individual, but the individual for the many. Hobbes tho 1 { 1 that the people were the property of the

king, but Locke that the king was the agent of the people. When a monarch rules agreeably with the laws, and when he is as he ought to be, and as Cosmo de Medicis was termed, "The father of the people, and the deliverer of his country;" when the subjects are virtuous and loyal, the state will be prosperous and happy.

When the supreme power is not hereditary, but dependent on the choice of the people, the government is republican. If the passions of men were less warm in political matters; if ambition, private interest, and an undue desire of liberty did not influence the minds of men, a commonwealth would be one of the best forms of government: but when it is remembered, that every man is endeavouring to raise himself; that patriotism is a rare feeling; that many men are unprincipled, and will risk the stability of the state for their own advantage, it will appear that a republic must be one of the least tranquil and durable forms of government. It will do better for a young state, but it will never do to be grafted on an old one. The lower classes of the people are always the most numerous, and where every one has got a hand in steering the vessel of the state, the democracy will have the principal power; consequently in Rome, and in some other republics, the mob were the governors. When the people imagined that a law was unfavourable to their interests, they rose tumultuously, and compelled the nominal lawgivers to submit to these actual legislators. The unprincipled being frequently poor, having nothing to lose and every thing to gain, are delighted with

every revolution ; because the shipwreck of property may throw some part of the treasure on their shores ; and the poor, who are honest, are easily led astray ; and thus in a democracy, where a full scope is given to their feelings, the people are generally discontented and disorderly. The object of those who have nothing to lose, is to level all ranks to their own condition. " Your levellers," observed Dr. Johnson, " wish to level *down* as far as themselves, but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves." It is then a low feeling of self-interest which stimulates one man to obtain, if he can, what belongs to another ; but it is a more allowable feeling for a person to wish to retain what he has honestly acquired. If a poor man possess a cot of his own, and ten pounds in money, with a cow and a horse, how would he like for another man, or for several, to come in and share with him what he had honestly acquired ? Now the principle is the same, whether it apply to little property or much ; consequently that is the best form of government which will preserve most completely for the subject his honest acquisitions.

In a good government the people indirectly rule ; they choose agents to represent their interests ; the nobility also represent theirs : the king is independent of each, and yet dependent on both ; the ministers are chosen by the king, but their continuance depends on the nation. This beautiful system we have the happiness to possess in this kingdom, and recently it has been renewed ; the edifice has been repaired and cleared, and restored to its original beauty. So far the nation has

done well, and a disadvantage would only arise from too great a zeal to remove imperfections ; and thus, while we seek for perfection, while we grasp at the shadow, we may lose the substance. Let it be remembered, that nothing among the systems of men is perfect ; and that abuses, misrule, and oppression will continually arise ; these should be immediately checked, but let it not be imagined that an alteration of the system would prevent every evil. As long as men are liable to be blinded, and as long as there are persons destitute of virtue, there will be cause of complaint.

All persons who possess property, and who would therefore feel an interest in maintaining a regular system of government, should have a voice in the election of representatives. Montesquieu says, " Every man should have a right of voting at the election of a representative, except such as are in so mean a situation as to have no will of their own." It has been maintained, that every individual, though he be a beggar, should have an influence in the government ; but this is questionable. The poor man cannot be much worse, but he may become better, he may therefore deem it inconsistent with his interest that the present system should continue. And if the poor man possess one vote, should not the rich man be favoured with more than one ? If every man were a voter, the poor would form the majority, and they might, at any time, appropriate to their own use the possessions of their neighbours. A system of this kind, or a fear of this sort, would check the influence of genius and industry, of civilisation and

commerce. "I am not one of those," observes Bishop Watson, "who stickle for the abstract right of every individual having a vote in the election, nor for the ancient practice of having a new parliament elected every year, provided the integrity of parliament could be obtained by other means." Now the system of universal suffrage would not contribute to integrity; nor would the appointment of an annual parliament contribute to efficiency in the members; for, in the former case, there would be the interests of the democracy to be served, at the expense of the more wealthy; and in the latter case, as soon as a man became acquainted with his duty, he would be obliged to resign. If the right of voting were given to every man, why not give it to every woman, for the Druids allowed females to take a part in their councils: and if to women, why not to children? There must be a line drawn somewhere; the present rule, established by the recent act, is exceedingly good; and the septennial period for parliaments, with the casualties which bring them to four or five years on an average, is better for the members and better for the people.

One principal source of happiness in a state is tranquillity; the ruler, therefore, should perform his duty with integrity and calmness, and the people should not stir themselves greatly on every trifling occasion, but only in very important matters. Many regulations will necessarily appear irksome to the people; but afterwards they will probably be approved. At Milan, the doors of the houses were made to open on the outside, to

the great inconvenience of passengers. Napoleon obliged the inhabitants to alter them. The people thought it a grievous hardship, and made a great deal of resistance ; but afterwards, when their doors were hung within, they perceived the advantage of it, and were very well pleased. The ruling power ought to be so strong as to carry all proper regulations without difficulty. There should be a promptness of purpose and action. For, if there be no chance of succeeding by opposition, discontented persons will be quiet ; but, if there be a probability of preventing it by clamour, they will try what they can do. And when it is remembered, that people are frequently misinformed and frequently perverse, the necessity of this power at the head of a nation will be acknowledged. For rulers (that is, the legitimate kind of rulers) are appointed or allowed by the Almighty, "for the punishment of evil doers," as St. Paul observes, "and for the praise of them that do well."

It is the imperative duty of a governor to study the welfare of the subject. The rule of St. Louis of France to his son was a good one : — "Take care that the people live in peace and happiness under thee." In this country, the wisdom and virtue of a minister may affect the happiness of thousands of persons. But the people should not expect too much. If the legislator apparently performs as much as he can, the people should be contented. As good practice arises from good principles, no man should be chosen as a minister, or even as a representative, except he were a man of virtue. Agreeably to the recommendation of

Solon, no immoral man should ever take the reins of government. Alexander, who did many noble actions and spoke many noble sayings, replied, when he was asked, just before his death, to whom the kingdom should be given, — “To the most worthy.”

In monarchies, some religious system will generally be connected with the state. If the king be a religious man, he will hold some particular opinions, and he will patronise some particular form of worship; his courtiers will do the same; and many of his high officers will follow the example of their sovereign. By this means a vast deal of influence will be connected with one body of worshippers rather than with another. Certain privileges will be granted by the state to the Church, and the Church will give in return all its influence to the state. Thus, a mutual benefit may be conferred, but it becomes an evil when the Church sells its independence and piety for servility and wealth. Civil and religious governments should be kept distinct: one relates to this life, and the king is the head; the other to a better world, and the Almighty is the governor. It is the basest of all prostitutions when religion disgraces itself by seeking worldly power. In a commonwealth, there will not often be a connection of secular with worldly things; though there was at Geneva, and in this country during the Protectorship. But if the president be frequently changed, then one may be of this religion and another may be the opposite, while the next may be of no religion. When the church is connected with the state, every

man at the head of affairs is obliged to respect the forms of divine worship ; and thus, although there are some disadvantages, there is also a great benefit. The influence of men in power is exceedingly great : if a man despises piety, and even the forms of it, he diffuses a baneful influence throughout society ; but if he pay a proper deference to it, the feelings of religious men are not wounded, and the conduct of libertines is not countenanced.

As the legitimate object of government is the increase of happiness, and as one effect of government is a certain degree of coercion ; so the true object of a religious establishment is the welfare of the people, and one of its effects is a certain degree of rule or influence. We cannot expect to receive an advantage from an institution except we obey its requirements ; and as the advantage will be pleasant, the requirement, abstractedly considered, will be irksome. But men must put the disadvantage against the advantage, and choose or refuse agreeably to the amount of the latter over the former. In order that a body of teachers may be maintained, a certain part of the incomes of those who are taught must be appropriated for that purpose. But if the professed teachers be not capable of performing their duty, or not willing to act consistently, the payment would be unjust, if otherwise they should be supported. Every church, as Addison says, is a school for the teaching of virtue. Now, a seminary of this kind in every parish may be productive of incalculable good ; and if the state do not exert itself in promoting religion, and some particular kind of religion, who

can affirm that religion will be supported at all? People in general are very inattentive to what interferes with their own practices and vices. Besides, religion is frequently generated by rivalry. In this country there would have been no dissenters, if there had been no establishment to dissent from. And besides this, the zeal of dissenters has stimulated the Church of England; and the efforts of the church have urged on dissenters. It may be stated, without fear of contradiction, that there is much more religion in this country than there would be if there were no Establishment. A state religion should be approved and instituted by the majority of the nation; and it should continue no longer than the majority may think proper. Whenever the nation may be inclined for an alteration, there is no principle of reason or justice which would prevent it. A change in this country, perhaps, would be attended with no advantage; but there always will be some who will dissent from the general mode of worship. It would be difficult to find a church that has acted with more liberality towards other sects than the Church of England has — (there may be some exceptions with regard to individuals, but this is the general character); and it would be impossible to find one adorned with greater learning. If all its ministers were eminent for virtue and piety, it would be exceedingly gratifying; there are many that are not so; but this is rather a disgrace to the persons than to the system.

In every religious establishment there must be various ranks of clergy, and, as rank is dependent on income, the income of some must be tolerably

large. Châteaubriand says of a variety of orders in the church, — “ The head of the church was a prince, that he might be able to speak to princes ; the bishops, placed upon an equal footing with the nobles, durst instruct them in their duties ; the priests, secular and regular, being raised above the necessities of life, mingled with the rich, whose manners they refined ; and the humble curate dwelt among the poor, whom he was destined to relieve by his bounty and to console by his example.” The rich require to be taught, and to have religious companions, as much as the poor ; but a man in the inferior ranks of the church would not be a proper person to control and to improve the conduct of the nobility. Bishops are, therefore, as necessary as curates.

Religious and civil offices ought not to be connected ; for the duties of a priest, if they be properly performed, are sufficient to occupy the attention of one person. Besides, a minister of religion should not be perplexed with political or civil affairs ; for they generally prevent the mind from attending so closely to sacred things. A priest should also be free from reproach ; and this can hardly be expected, if he make himself zealous in any thing besides virtue and piety. A minister ought to be able to say with David, — “ I will wash my hands in innocency : so will I compass thine altar, O Lord ! ” Among the heathen, the priests were dressed in white, as an emblem of purity. They were free from civil offices ; and they were exempt from war. In the present day, the clergy are free from the duties of war : they ought also

to be unconnected with secular appointments; no clergyman ought to be a magistrate. There are many wealthy and worthy country gentlemen, who have leisure and ability for performing the duties of this office, and, being untrammelled by any profession, they would be likely to act with impartiality. The Scotch have acted very consistently in this respect. "It has always been," says Dr. M'Crie, "a principle of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, that the ministers of religion ought not to be distracted from the duties of their office by holding civil places."

The Roman Church owed some part of its grandeur to a connection with civil government; but when it became most secular, then it was most unstable. There were bishops and generals united in the same men, as well as cardinals and prime ministers. The power which it possessed was one occasion of its cruel and persecuting spirit. There will be, in most sects, a degree of bigotry and bitterness towards other bodies of worshippers, especially if controversy have warmed their feelings: but without the civil power they can only bark; when the state assists them, they bite. There ought to be a perfect freedom for every person that worships the Almighty, if his practice be virtuous, and his method of worshipping and his doctrine be not injurious to others. If the state (which in a representative government consists of the majority of talent and property,) choose to patronise some particular sect, it may do so; but the majority should lay no burdens on the minority. The state may interfere to check vice and impiety,

but it is questionable whether these evils may not be counteracted by the force of reason. If the men in office show a good example ; if none be admitted into an inferior station, except those who are virtuous ; and if institutions for the spread of religion be countenanced ; more good may be done than by coercive measures. A prosecution of a low and vicious author sometimes brings the fellow into notice. The curiosity of the people is excited, and every one enquires, — Where is the book for which the man was fined or imprisoned ? The same results arise, if the writer publishes what is unpalatable to the government, but favourable to liberty and virtue. Dr. M'Crie, in his *Life of Knox*, observes, that the bishops and others in Scotland endeavoured to check the influence of the press which sent forth rhymes and ballads in favour of the Reformation ; but “metrical epistles,” he observes, “moralities, and psalms, in the Scottish language, continued to be read with avidity, notwithstanding prohibitory statutes and prosecutions.”

All governments are liable to become corrupt ; they should, therefore, be frequently renewed. “*Civile jus est mutabile*,” observes Zouch ; “*ea jure quæ quæque Civitas ipsa sibi constituit, sæpe mutari solent*.” But then changes should be effected gradually, and as necessity may require ; great convulsions are generally attended with great danger. Power is exceedingly pleasing to man, and every one endeavours to increase his influence : the people will try to increase theirs ; if they succeed, a democracy will be established : the king

will endeavour to enlarge his; if he succeeds, he will form a despotism, or absolute sovereignty. In Great Britain, there is a beautiful counterpoise of the one part to the other; and the independency of the three estates (except in any particular instance when a narrow selfishness is apparent) should always be maintained.

Tyranny exists in the early stages of society, when there are no laws, for every man is afraid of others. And tyranny exists, when the people have broken down the laws. This was the case with the Egyptians and the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans, the Venetians and the French. In France, a dreadful example of tyranny without law existed at the time of the Revolution, when every right of person, property, friendship, honour, and security, was violated. Then houses were burned for mere amusement; men were tortured and put to death; churches were converted into prisons; scaffolds for execution were erected on the turf which covered the retreat of lifeless mortals; cemeteries were torn open, and the dust of the inmates was scattered in the air; human bodies were pulled out of coffins, in which they had been recently deposited, and thrown into the streets; every thing that was abhorrent to the feelings of humanity was practised on that memorable occasion. If liberty were only a guide to such horrid practices, it would be better to dwell in slavery. The tyranny of one is better than the tyranny of a hundred. A law may be good in itself, but it may not be appropriate for the time: many of the principles advocated by the early revolutionists were good, but they were unfit

for the people ; and thus, instead of benefiting the country, they overset the altar and the throne.

But there is also the tyranny of the absolute monarch, which is generally fatal to the happiness of a country. "If I had ever thought," observes Châteaubriand, "with men for whose character and talents I have otherwise the highest respect, that an absolute government is the best of all governments, a few months' residence in Turkey would have completely cured me of that opinion." A despot rules his officers with a rod of iron ; and his officers, though they are suppliant to their master, are despots to those who are beneath them. The excellent writer, to whom I have just alluded, mentions a case of injustice which happened in Greece ; and this is an every-day specimen of the arbitrary and cruel government of the Turks.—At one of the military stations, "the guards perceived a peasant, who was scrambling up the mountain out of the road : they called to him to come down, but he could not hear them. The commandant (who was a very fat and indolent man) then rose with difficulty ; he took deliberate aim at the peasant between the fir-trees, and fired. After this exploit, the Turk returned, and seated himself on his mat with as much calmness and composure as ever. The peasant descended to the guard, to all appearance wounded, for he wept and showed his blood ; on which fifty strokes of the bastinado were administered to cure him." Human life and human happiness, in a tyrannical government, are not valued ; and miserable is the condition of that people, who, by the fortune of war, are subjected to

the rule of hard masters; or, by the ambition of their own countrymen, are enslaved to the few or the many.

Nations that are degraded by a tyrant's yoke may most effectually break their chains by acquiring knowledge and practising virtue. "Be virtuous," said Plato to his countrymen, "and ye shall be free." But when the hand of tyranny presses down a people, the clouds of ignorance generally cover them; and this is one reason why the oppressed continue so long incapable of relieving themselves; at last, some greater hardship arouses their indignation; they determine to throw off their yoke, or perish in the attempt. When the feelings of a nation have been thus excited, the people may be apparently tranquil; but it is like the stillness which precedes a storm, or the scarcely perceptible rumbling which indicates an earthquake; then the most trivial event serves as a leading and exciting principle, and the whole nation rises against its oppressors. Reformations in religion and in civil government have thus proceeded from a trifling accident. The downfall of popery in Scotland commenced with a trivial occurrence at Perth.—"A boy," observes Dr. M'Crie, "having uttered some expressions of disapprobation, was struck by a priest. He retaliated by throwing a stone at the aggressor, which, falling on the altar, broke one of the images. This operated like a signal upon the persons present, who had sympathised with the boy; and in the course of a few minutes, the altar, images, and all the ornaments of the church, were torn down and trampled under

foot." The noise attracted others, and the people flew to the monasteries, which they levelled to the ground. This feeling extended to other parts of the kingdom. The great reformation of Luther might never have begun (or, at any rate, not so soon), if Tetzel, a Dominican friar, had not gone to Wittenburg to sell indulgences. Mighty alterations in civil government have commenced with a trifling event; but it is a dangerous experiment, if the government of a state be overthrown; and it should never be practised except in circumstances of the utmost necessity. It is the interest of rulers to be prompt in reforming abuses — in regulating the laws by the character of the times. Men and customs change; and as the tide of knowledge rolls onward, the channel must be adapted to its nature and extent; but it must always be remembered, that as the banks of a river restrain and regulate the course of the waters, so the laws of a country, if they be just and beneficial, will control the dispositions and actions of the people. Perhaps an universal taste for political science is not conducive to the welfare of a state. For the fact is, that the lower classes of society, over their cups of ale, will pretend to investigate and decide on matters which require profounder heads and cooler tempers. Men are too apt to estimate or regulate the condition of others by their own; and, consequently, the establishment of a state, which is necessary, for the honour of a kingdom, to be somewhat magnificent and expensive, is deemed to be extravagant. If the poor man receives ten shillings for a week's labour, he fancies that five guineas a week would be enough,

and, indeed, would be handsome pay, for a person in one of the highest offices: this is one reason why a republican government diminishes the salary and the respectability of its officers; and this is also a reason why it is less durable than a monarchy; for the people must be regulated, and if they will not act as good subjects, they must be compelled; and they are compliable, or otherwise, in proportion as they are influenced by fear and hope. There is more fear occasioned by the grandeur and power of a monarchy; and there is more hope of exciting disorders in a republic. Governors must be just and virtuous; subjects must be loyal and contented; and then, the ruling principle being sufficiently powerful for the regulation of the people, the ship of the state may be triumphantly steered on the rolling waves, amidst the boisterous winds: this, and this only—is liberty; but, if the power of the helmsman be insufficient — if the government be ineffective — the vessel will become the sport of the elements, and, as it was with many of the ancient commonwealths, it will be totally wrecked.

The most perfect contrast to liberty is the condition in which a man is subject, — body, goods, family, and inclination, to the will of a private individual. Cicero defines slavery of this kind as “the servitude of a degraded and abject mind, which possesses no will of its own.” It is perfectly inconsistent with reason, that one man should be the degraded vassal of another. All men are equal by birth; they differ in fortune and rank; but a man should be bound no further than to voluntary

labour or subjection for the sake of a maintenance.

The system of slavery is very ancient ; it sprang up in the uncultivated ages of the world, and it has thriven most vigorously in the absence of knowledge and virtue. As nations become adorned with science and good principles, they generously break the galling chains of slavery. The English have done a great deal in this way, and will, without doubt, accomplish much more. It is said of Abraham, that he possessed 318 servants, born in his house, and trained to arms. But this was a species of slavery very different to that which is inflicted by planters and others, where the captive strangers are chained in companies, and forced to labour by the influence of the whip. Slaves, however, in this early period, were the complete property of their masters, and they were transferable at the will of their owners ; and thus, when Abimelech wished to make some compensation to Abraham for the harm which he had done, he not only restored Sarah his wife, but gave him men-servants and women-servants. Slavery has been brought down to our own day, or nearly so, within this kingdom. Dr. Hamilton observes, that "in Scotland, till lately, labourers employed in coal-mines and salt-works were bondsmen. This remnant of slavery is now abolished without any detriment to society."

Almost all the ancient nations made slaves of the enemies which were taken in war. The Phœnicians were the first to make a traffic in human flesh ; and this disgraceful practice has been

continued. In Africa, the trade in slaves has been carried to a most disgraceful extent; one nation makes war upon another, for the sole purpose of obtaining slaves for the market. The ancient Germans sometimes voluntarily sold themselves, with their wives and children, into perpetual bondage, for the purpose of gratifying their inclination for gambling.

Slavery originates in the basest passions of men, — revenge, avarice, and cruelty; it may be expected, therefore, that it would not only be patronised by the worthless, but that the treatment of the poor captives would be sometimes brutal. At Sparta, they were shamefully used; in Athens and Rome, they were treated badly. The gladiators were slaves. Veditius Pollio threw many of his slaves into ponds, as food for lampreys! In Sicily, during the commonwealth, Demophilus used to shut up his slaves at night in dungeons, and lead them out in the morning, like beasts, to cruel labour. In Barbadoes, in the present day, the penalty for wantonly killing a slave is fifteen pounds! There will be very little proof of growing civilisation — of an increase of wisdom and virtue — until slavery in every country be abolished.

Slavery is not only cruel to the slave with respect to his labour and treatment, but it naturally degrades him to the character of a brute. There is no stimulus to improvement, and no check to evil; for an advancement in knowledge would tend to make his condition less bearable, and an acquisition of property, in most cases, would belong to the master; and if they act brutishly, and live in

the condition and with the feelings of swine, they enjoy a low sensuality. They have little inducement to gain a good character; and few of them have any character to lose.

With regard to the emancipation of West India slaves, it may be observed, that a gradual abolition would be much more beneficial than a sudden one, not only to the sufferers, but to the interests of commerce. Freedom is useless to any man, except he be adapted for it, — as useless as delightful scenery to a person afflicted with blindness; while the culture of estates, and the value of property, would be best preserved by a gradual change from slave labour to free labour. It is fair, also, that the disadvantage arising from an abolition of slavery should be borne by the state. The laws have made slavery legal; it is therefore a national affair. If the great body of the people be inclined to abolish it, — which feeling is exceedingly praiseworthy, — let them, with this philanthropy, make a little personal sacrifice, and then their conduct will be still more noble, and the abolition of slavery will be to the nation as honourable, as it will be to the poor African delightful.

CHAP. II.

ON WAR AND PEACE.

WAR has been a source of the greatest calamities. The saying of Lord Burleigh, in the time of Elizabeth, will be confirmed by every observing person in the present day ; — “ Warre is the curse, and peace the blessing, of a countrie.” It is only, as Erasmus used frequently to observe, “ for want of experience, that war appears sweet.” The passions are excited, and the imagination is pleased with the sounds of victory and glory ; but we hear very little, and, by the blessing of Providence, we see very little, in this country, of the horrors connected with warfare.

War is generally produced by ignorance or vice. There have been wars of superstition and bigotry : in Egypt, battles were fought between the patrons and the opposers of crocodile worship ; in Italy, during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, there were wars between the worshippers and the destroyers of images. The crusades destroyed tens of thousands of men, and a vast deal of treasure. And there have been wars for the sole purpose of conquest. It has been deemed a doubtful matter, whether wars of any kind be lawful. Most men acknowledge that aggression is culpable, but they admit that defensive war is allowable ; and perhaps,

in the present state of the world, whenever reason or argument is incapable of enforcing an equitable claim for the retainment of lawful property, force may be necessary and justifiable. Puffendorf has made the distinction (in a note, cap. 16. de Officiis Hominis),—"Accuratè loquendo, distinctio belli in offensionem et defensionem, bello justo ac injusto æqualiter convenit."

It has been usual among all nations to enforce the obedience of civil laws by penalties: reason is first appealed to, and then fear. If the laws are violated, coercion takes the place of argument. The laws of nations are formed by the consent of mankind; if these are broken, force is necessary to repair the injury, or to prevent a recurrence of the evil. But with regard to a community in particular, or the world in general, it is the possession of power, and the capability of using it, which prevents a greater number of aggressions. As the members of a state have not always honour or virtue enough to prevent them from illegal acts, and nothing but fear will restrain them, so it is among nations. We have no more reason for supposing that the inhabitants of a kingdom would refrain from offering insults or inflicting injuries on a neighbouring people, than we have to imagine that an individual would never break the laws of his country. Honour will not always prevent injustice, and therefore fear is necessary as a check; and if we may not expect a miracle among individuals, why may we look for it among nations? As a posture of defence is necessary for preventing injuries, and as the actual use of force will some-

times be demanded for checking oppression, defensive war may be allowed. Dr. Beattie goes still further, and says,—“If a nation be troublesome to its neighbours, and, after frequent defeats, refuse to be quiet, the victor may pursue his advantages till he has subdued them.”

But it may be enquired — What is the law of nations? Richard Zouch replies, from Ulpianus,—“*Est quo gentes humanæ utuntur, quod propter utilitatem et necessitatem introductum fuit.*” It is a system of acknowledged rights, which was introduced as a matter of use and necessity. By the same rule, it may be enquired — What is the law of virtue? or, What is the rule of reason and propriety? — It is that which the experience of mankind taught among the heathen, and which a superior degree of information teaches more fully in the present day. If the law of nations is sometimes violated, it arises from ignorance or vice; but if vice and ignorance will induce nations to act contrarily to the principles of justice, when they have force to contend with, would they not do it more frequently if there were no power to control them? It may be replied, — There is a principle in human nature, which would prevent men from acting dishonourably, from taking an advantage of weakness and inoffensiveness. But, it may be asked, do we find it so among banditti? — Was it so among the northern nations when they desolated Europe? Have not ambitious warriors, when they have had no cause for an invasion, invented one; and if they could not find a plausible reason, have they not done without one? Alexander had no just motive for his conquests:

he was a mighty plunderer; he was exalted as a god by his sycophants. When he was desolating Scythia, the inhabitants said, "If thou be a god, thou must do good to man, and not evil. Why dost thou take away from us what doth not belong to thee?" The Spaniards had no just pretence for murdering the Inca of Peru, and for seizing the country; but they did it. Although honourable and virtuous men will not act basely, yet the ambitious, the avaricious, and the cruel will do so. It is said of Corbulo, the proconsul of Syria, that he reduced Artaxata, a large and beautiful city, to ashes, and ruined the inhabitants, who had never done any harm to him: the innocent must therefore guard themselves against the unprincipled. Besides, is it possible to make all the inhabitants of a country of the same mind? Can they be persuaded to maintain an uniformity of conduct? Has not a trifling quarrel among fishermen, travellers, or merchants, generated a powerful feeling throughout a province, and served, almost unavoidably, to occasion a conflict? The fact is, that in this case, as in many others, we may exclaim, —

"What dire events from trifling causes spring!"

and such as no policy or firmness could have avoided.

But what is defensive war? Every nation, when it is engaged in a struggle, pretends to have justice on its side. It asserts that the war was begun for the purpose of self-defence; for preserving rights; for preventing a repetition of insults; for the maintenance of some ancient agreement, either ex-

pressed or understood. But although truth and error are thus confounded, and although it may be difficult, in some instances, to draw a line between defence and aggression; yet there is a difference, as much as there is between virtue and vice, although these cannot always be strictly defined. All cases of offensive war are unjustifiable; and, in proportion as any wars partake of this character, they must be condemned. Bishop Watson observed in the House of Lords, "that no war can be justified on any principle, either of revealed or natural religion, till indemnity for past injury, and security against future aggression, have been demanded and refused; till every means of accommodation have been tried — tried with a sincere desire for preserving peace — and tried in vain."

Wars of a defensive kind have sometimes become aggressive; but these must be condemned in the same proportion as they appear to have been intentionally so. If the motive were merely to prevent a recurrence of oppression on the part of their enemy, it may be allowable: but the fears of a nation cannot always decide correctly: there may be an apprehension of danger without cause; and it would not be just to destroy a nation, in order to prevent them from the chance of troubling their neighbours. If the motive be revenge; if one nation fall on another, and endeavour to crush it, not because of what it fears, but because of what has happened; it is not justifiable; for the Almighty declares (and it is particularly applicable in this case), "Vengeance is mine." That the

Supreme Being does look down from heaven, and influence the conduct of armies, and decide the destinies of nations, is exceedingly probable; though the grand period for rewarding merit and demerit is appointed for a future day. After Genseric had fixed his seat of empire at Carthage, he had got together a mighty fleet; and being about to sail, the pilot enquired, — “Prince, to what part of the world shall I direct my course?” — “To that,” replied the commander, “which the Almighty beholds in his wrath.” There might have been more than the influence of human councils in this matter.

There will generally be much obscurity and incorrectness with regard to the progress of a war. This arises from mistaken and exaggerated reports of skirmishes, battles, and retreats. Indeed, there are more misrepresentations connected with the origin and character of war, than with any other matter. The passions are excited, while justice and truth are sacrificed to a timid selfishness. But we are required in every case to act, as nearly as possible, by the rule of correctness; and with regard to the legality of war, we may deem it consistent to draw the distinction between right and wrong, at the division between what may appear to be aggression, and what may appear to be defence. If a man might not assist his fellow creatures to beat an enemy from the shores, how would he know that the shores would be preserved? Lycurgus was once asked, why he did not make Sparta a republic? “Go, my friend,” he replied, “and try it in your own family.” To any

one, therefore, who would advise us to take no precautions for the safety of the kingdom, but to disband the army and the navy, and then that no one would have a disposition to molest us, it may be said, — “Go, my friend, and try it with your own property.” If it be supposed that the Almighty will preserve a man in safety without his own precaution, then a person may leave his house without securing it with locks and bars; for the Supreme Being will surely accomplish what is small, if he will accomplish what is great. But the advocates for passiveness in regard to war, secure their houses; and some of them, during an invasion, or in the expectation of an invasion, have not been backward in supplying the soldiery with equipments, or in assisting the defenders of their country by more active measures, though they would not themselves handle a weapon. But aiding is just the same as performing. If this earth were a paradise — if nothing evil dwelt thereon — wars would be unknown; but if it be remembered, that it is tenanted by many unprincipled men and ambitious nations, and the natural result of vice is the oppression and injury of the weak, it will be perceived that there is a good reason why persons in private and in public life should endeavour to defend themselves. If a highwayman attacks a person in a solitary place, he takes advantage not only of the loneliness of the person attacked, but of his probably unprepared condition for the assault; but if the traveller be provided with a heavy whip, would there be any crime in using it, and in stunning the fellow, if possible, by a blow? But the

blow might alight on the temple and kill him: this would be defensive war and death; but who could reasonably object to it? It is said in the Sacred Scriptures, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;" but this refers to matters of conscience and suffering for the sake of religion: the strong man armed who preserved his goods, is not considered an imprudent or a wicked man. It might be said, — It would be better to lose a little property, than to run the risk of taking away a man's life. This is plausible, but it may not be true. The life of a highwayman is not so valuable to society; and the number of these dangerous persons would be increased in proportion to the safety and success which were afforded to them. But, it will be said, it is dreadful for a man to be hurried into the presence of his Maker unprepared. This is true also; but it is not likely that an increase of years would occasion a decrease of crime; and besides, it is self-preservation; the person who had done no harm might otherwise be murdered. The robber calculates on the risk of losing his life, either by the hand of the traveller, or the arm of the law; he runs into danger, therefore, with his eyes open. But it may be said that the law alone should act; and if the man be condemned to die, he may prepare himself for heaven. The truth is, that the great excitation of feeling to which the human mind is liable under distressing circumstances, and the transition from despair to hope, which sometimes arises mechanically, will sometimes make the murderer happy on the scaffold.

We may leave the result to the Almighty ; but we must not suffer our fancy to mislead us. The murderer has not only an account to give to the civil laws ; but he has a dreadful account to give to his Maker, who has said, — “ Thou shalt do no murder.” But the same persons, who would object to the influence of force against force, might also decline to avail themselves of the assistance of the law for the punishment of robbers or murderers ; and thus they would make unprincipled men bolder : and although, in a solitary case, the influence of mercy might soften the heart ; yet, when necessity compels, a desperate person screws up his courage with the help of stimulating liquors, so that he cares as little for gratitude and honour as he does for the laws. All preventive punishment is the inflicting of one evil for the prevention of another ; and all retributive punishment is a species of revenge or warning. If we object to avail ourselves of either, we must avoid the mildest checks, and the most trivial reflections ; not only actions, but even words and thoughts, would, in such cases, be wrong ; we must be perfectly passive — we must, in fact, be unconscious.

War, however, has been generally the tool of ambitious men ; and war must be generally condemned. Warfare would never have enchanted the imagination of youth and inexperience, if it had not been attended by fictions of glory, by military pomp, by splendid triumph. How great is the influence of music !

“ But when our country’s cause provokes to arms,
How martial music every bosom warms ! ”

and not only in defensive, but in aggressive war, it stimulates the barbarian and the polished warrior, the inexperienced and the veteran. The description of Milton is magnificent : —

—— “ The powers militant
That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate join’d
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
Heroic ardour to advent’rous deeds.”

And what can be more imposing than a vast army of various nations, in different costumes, with their standards lowered, and their weapons prostrate ; all on their bended knees before the God of Heaven, and with one loud voice giving praises to Him for a glorious victory ? This is frequently inconsistent ; but there is nothing on earth which excites a deeper feeling. The Almighty sometimes allows the unjust to triumph ; and praises are frequently offered to Him, which are an abomination. The blood of thousands may be enrolled in the book of remembrance, to be brought against these very armies at the last great day. Scott of Amwell has represented war without its pomp and dazzling decorations ; he has torn aside the veil, and viewed this dreadful scourge in its natural colours : —

“ I hate that drum’s discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round ;
To me it talks of ravaged plains,
And burning towns, and ruin’d swains,
And mangled limbs, and dying groans,
And widow’s tears, and orphan’s moans,
And all that misery’s hand bestows,
To fill the catalogue of woes.”

What miseries have been produced by war! what unquietness, alarm, and despair! A calm and Christian spirit throughout the world would generate happiness and security. In some parts of Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Arabia, and Egypt, the inhabitants are continually afraid of attacks from bands of warlike and cruel depredators: the husbandman is obliged to work with a spade in one hand, and a weapon in the other. The northern barbarians were a dreadful scourge to Europe. Robertson says (in his History of Charles V.), that in the course of two centuries they had taken and plundered Britain, Spain, Gaul, Italy, and a part of Africa. Who can calculate the distress and sufferings occasioned by these inroads? When Alexander besieged Thebes, the carnage was so great, that more than six thousand men were killed in the city; and the inhabitants suffered greatly by famine. When Scipio Æmilianus attacked Carthage, the struggle lasted for six successive days. Every house was assaulted separately, and taken by storm. One part of the Romans were employed with crooks to pull back the dead bodies, while the rest were engaged with the enemy. The inhabitants of Alexia were reduced to such extremity when their city was surrounded by the army of Cæsar, that they were compelled to feed themselves on their old men, women, and children! Jerusalem suffered several times the horrors of war; the last siege was the most dreadful, and such as no city had before experienced. But the Romans themselves were obliged to endure a somewhat similar calamity. When Rome was invested

by the hordes of the North, in the sixth century, the Roman troops were for some time supplied with a small quantity of provisions ; but the inhabitants were destitute of food ; and they were driven to such extremity, that their cries were distracting, many hundreds of persons killed themselves, and the rest devoured one another.

In war, the most novel and effective means are employed for the destruction of human life. Ingenuity is strained to afflict mankind. There have been weapons of various sorts ; — spears, bows and arrows, slings, darts, tomahawks, and battle-axes ; lances, cimeters, swords, dirks, and poniards ; guns, muskets, pistols, bombs, grenadoes, mortars, and all kinds of artillery ; weapons of wood and stone, gold and steel ; — all for the purpose of inflicting suffering and death ! When the crusaders under St. Louis had reached the shores of Africa, they were attacked by the Moors in a most unexpected manner. The natives took advantage of the *kamsin*, or tempest of the desert ; and with machines raised clouds of sand, which almost overwhelmed the Christian army : thousands of men perished. Treachery — indeed, any method for the destruction of life is practised — and thus the army of Hannibal was almost destroyed. Scipio Africanus caused the Carthaginian tents to be set on fire at night ; and being composed of reed, with other combustible materials, they blazed most furiously, until the whole encampment was a sheet of fire : forty thousand men were burnt to death. How horrid is war ! and yet there are men who

will sacrifice whole nations to their ambitious projects; as if, in the language of Coleridge —

——“ The soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Pass'd off to Heaven, translated and not kill'd; —
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
Nor God to judge him ! ”

Ambition hardens the feelings, and war produces cruelty; else Tacitus would never have said what he did of the horrid slaughter of the Bructarii: — “ By the favour of the gods,” he observes, “ we had the pleasure of observing this conflict without taking any part in it. We witnessed sixty thousand men cutting each other's throats for our amusement. May the nations at war with us continue to cherish these mutual animosities ! ”

Peace appears sometimes to have taken her final leave of men. Sometimes a generation passes away, and there is nothing but the alarm of war. Azotus was surrounded by the armies of Egypt for twenty-nine years. Europe, in our time, has been desolated with war for more than twenty years. The Temple of Janus at Rome was shut only eight times, and those were short periods; and the Temple of Peace was consumed by fire — as if the elements themselves would sweep away all monuments in honour of tranquillity and security.

War has been a dreadful curse to subjects; but have rulers and great generals gained much by warfare? A glance at the history of some of the most eminent will convince us to the contrary.

Cyrus extended his power, and established a mighty empire; he reached the very pinnacle of the temple of glory, and then he was slain in an ambush by Queen Tomaris, in Scythia, and his head being cut off, was thrown into a vessel of blood:—“There,” said the queen, “drink thy fill, for thou wert ever a blood-thirsty man.” Xerxes gloried in his power and in his mighty armies, and at last he was miserably assassinated by one of his guards. Alexander conquered the world, and died in the prime of life, a disgraceful death by intemperance. Pyrrhus II. was killed at Argos by a tile, which was thrown by a woman, and thus his glory was terminated. Hannibal destroyed himself by poison. Pompey and Cæsar fought for the dominion of the world, and the victor as well as the vanquished was assassinated. Charles XII. was killed by a cannon ball; and Napoleon finished his days in gloomy exile. The sun of the warrior may have arisen in beauty, and it may have shone brilliantly at the zenith, but it has generally set with a dark and troubled sky. Hence we may conclude, that wars of ambition are a curse to the leaders and the people, and that war in no case is allowable, except for the preservation of our rightful possessions.

Peace is exceedingly delightful: under its influence the arts are improved, the sciences diffuse their cheering influence into every corner of the land; the ground is cultivated; deserts are changed into fruitful pastures, and the valleys are adorned with trees; public buildings are raised; canals and other conveniences for trade are formed; commerce

flourishes; the poor are supplied with bread; the cot is safe in the humble valley; the palace in its retreat among forests; the town and the city are secure; ships convey the treasures of various nations without fear of an enemy; the government has leisure to direct its attention to internal affairs, — to the happiness of the nation. There are no dreaded and yet anxiously expected posts, to bring the account of sons or fathers slain on the field of battle; the feelings of humanity are less frequently shocked than they are during the progress of war; virtue and piety increase; and every one sits beneath his vine and fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. These are the natural and legitimate results of external and internal peace.

CHAP. III.

ON VIRTUE AND VICE.

THE word virtue among the Romans signified any great or heroic quality; but it is generally, in the present day, restricted to the conduct of one man towards another. Virtue and piety are frequently united in the same person, indeed the purest virtue springs from duty to God; but virtue refers chiefly to the laws of society, and piety refers primarily to the laws of our Maker. The man who lives honestly, because dishonesty would be unfavourable to his character and respectability, is a virtuous man; but he who does so because the Almighty requires it, is, in this respect, pious. Virtue refers to earth, and piety to heaven. The one prepares a man for this life, and the other for the next. Before Christianity was introduced, men were regulated most probably by the law of virtue only, — except in those countries where the Jewish law was promulgated: the same system may exist in barbarous countries in the present day. This, and this only, will account for the degradation of the inhabitants in their principles and their practice. A light from Heaven, though it were but a twinkling ray from the fountain of Goodness, would never allow the horrid practices which the laws of some countries have established. The nations to whom

St. Paul refers, who are destitute of law, are those probably who are left to their own guidance. Civilisation is necessary for virtue, and revelation for true piety. When the light of reason has shone brightly, salutary laws have been established. The great legislators, who have arisen in various ages, like suns have gilded the horizon, and thrown their rays among the people; they have shone, however, but a short time; they have not reached the zenith; they have not illumined all the nations; but their influence, like the shining of the sun on diamonds, has sometimes left a glimmering light for the darker ages. Piety cannot exist without virtue; but there may be a small degree of moral goodness without piety.

It was maintained by Pythagoras, and by the Peripatetics, that virtue is the medium of opposing vices. The same opinion has been expressed by Horace, "*Virtus est medium vitiorum.*" The phrase "*Medio tutissimus ibis*" was very common among the Romans. Virtue in its most extended sense — which is a consistent conduct arising from a sense of duty both to God and man — has been deemed in all ages the surest guide to happiness. Whether a person were accustomed to worship deities of wood and stone, or the one "only living and true God;" whether he instructed himself from the Shaster or the law of Moses, the Koran or the sacred Scriptures; the same opinion has prevailed: — the worship of superior beings, and the practice of consistent conduct as a good citizen, have been generally found to be contributive to prosperity and happiness. The reason is, that

truth and enjoyment are naturally connected: they harmonise in the Deity; and the one would be likely to produce the other in man. As the Christian dispensation then is free from the absurd and unreasonable requirements of pagan systems, it will follow that virtue and piety, or that degree of moral goodness which shall make a man a good member of society and a good Christian, will be the most effectual guide to happiness in the present day.

There has been an universal belief in a presiding Deity. The actions of men have been generally thought to be rewarded in this life, as well as in a future state. Kang Hi, Emperor of China, said, "Those who act uprightly gather the pleasant fruits of their conduct, and those who do ill are punished." The Siamese believe that virtue and vice are rewarded in this life. Cicero maintains, that no man is happy without virtue, "*Beatus autem esse sine virtute nemo potest.*" Thomson says,—

"What, what is virtue, but repose of mind,
A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm;
Above the reach of wild ambition's wind,
Above the passions that this world deform?"

Dr. Beattie has observed, that "kingdoms in every age have been flourishing and happy no longer than they have maintained their virtue." Virtue is a safeguard and an ornament. The Chevalier Bayard having been asked what was the best legacy which a father could give to his children, replied, — "*La vertu et la sagesse, qui ne craignent ni pluie, ni vent, ni tempeste, ni force*

d'homme." A man may be clothed in purple and fine linen ; he may fare sumptuously every day ; his stately mansion may lift its head above the surrounding dwellings ; he may be favoured with fortune ; he may be adorned with titles ; he may be endowed with power ; but if he be destitute of virtue, he will be weak, worthless, and joyless.

Virtue is so amiable, that even the vicious admire and respect it ; for if they speak ill of any, — if slander wields that weapon, which, as St. James declares, no man can properly tame, — it is not because the objects of their malice are virtuous and upright, not because they are too disinterested and too benevolent ; but they pretend that those persons are faulty ; that they have acted contrarily to their duty as citizens and Christians. What an incontrovertible argument in favour of virtue, when the vicious accuse others only because they are not virtuous !

Virtue is lovely in youth, in manhood, and in the decline of life. It is lovely, particularly in woman. Female beauty, without moral goodness, is like a painted carcass : it may be attractive, but the moment it is touched its true character is perceived ; the spell is broken ; disgust takes the place of admiration. Virtue and piety are beneficial in every condition of life. If a person be disengaged from the bustle of commerce, he will find himself more capable of contributing to his own happiness and the comfort of others ; he will discover the most rational methods of spending his time, and thus he will produce health and cheerfulness. If he be engaged in trade or merchandise, he will

have an opportunity of practising many excellent virtues. If he belong to a profession, he may also act consistently and beneficially ; he may favour the poor, and plead the cause of the oppressed ; he may, like Sir Matthew Hale, counsel his clients agreeably to truth ; or he may pour balm into the wounds of the afflicted, and afford help to those who are needy ; or, in the beautiful language of Scripture, he may "preach deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to such as be bound ;" he may guide the footsteps of men to everlasting bliss. If he be a mechanic, or a poor labourer, the possession of virtue and piety will endow him with temperance and health, economy and comfort ; it will make him contented, and submissive to the will of the Almighty.

Those who live virtuously, observes Seneca, will be hopeful and happy in their end. "*Virtutem cujus progressum videris, non exitum ejus finemque desperes.*" David says, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."—"Existence," says Cicero, in his beautiful vision of Scipio, "commences only in the everlasting mansions of souls ; and thither we cannot arrive without piety, religion, justice, respect to our parents, and a devotion to our country." And thus, when the body becomes infirm, when the soul longs for a more exalted habitation, for a happier home, the spirit of piety bursts forth, and brightens the way to everlasting repose. The fountains of Divine goodness accompany his progress in clear and grateful streams, to exhilarate him when his strength and spirits fail ; and the

glorious scenes of blissful immortality open to his view, when death draws aside the veil which separates time from eternity. "That," says St. Bernard, "is the true and chief joy, which is not conceived from the creature, but received from the Creator; which, being once possessed thereof, none can take from him; whereto all pleasure being compared is torment; all joy is grief; sweet things are bitter; all glory is baseness; and all delectable things are despicable." Not only will virtue and piety illumine the closing scenes of life, but they will cause an illustrious record to be left behind. Shirley observes,—

—— "The actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."

The rational and pious man feels his dependence on the Supreme Governor; and this feeling is expressed, by giving thanks for the past, and by soliciting favours for the future. "Never to acknowledge the enjoyments and privileges we have received," observes Wollaston, "is in effect to deny that we receive them from God; not to apply to him for what we want, is to deny either our own wants, or his power of helping us." But a difference of opinion has arisen as to the proper form of prayer. Pythagoras forbade his disciples to pray for any thing in particular from the Deity, because the Deity knew what his creatures required. Socrates used to ask nothing of the gods but what they saw fit for him. Plato said, we must be careful what we ask, lest we ask what is injurious. The prayer of Agur is admirable; and the prayer of

our Saviour includes all that can be asked: that clause of it, "Deliver us from evil," expresses almost all that we want. Prayer belongs more particularly to ourselves, for our own advantage. We are commanded to pray for rulers, and for all in authority; but this may have been enjoined because it generates a good and loyal feeling. No man will be a traitor while he prays for his sovereign. A somewhat similar feeling may occasion prayers for our fellow-creatures. No one can fancy, if he consider at all, that the present or everlasting happiness of any person can be dependent on the petition of a fellow-creature; otherwise the pious actions of one person would be put to the account of another person. How can the Almighty reward men according to *their* works, if he take into the account the works of *others*? Besides, if it refer to this life, would the Almighty require to be informed that a creature was suffering, and would he need to be entreated, to be moved to pity, to assist him? Or if it relate to everlasting happiness, would this be awarded to a person because another asked for it? By no means. Prayers for others will stimulate good-will and exertion in their behalf; but it is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity to imagine, that one man will be saved by the intercession of another. There is but one Mediator, and he intercedes for the suppliant who begs favours for himself. We might as well, with the Papists, depend on the prayers of saints, as on those of men. A person may pray for any general blessing, and he may supplicate the Almighty to withdraw any general

course, because the person who prays is a party concerned. Under the Jewish dispensation the matter was different, and so it was at the commencement of Christianity; but now, when the Christian dispensation has become fully established; when the power of performing miracles has been withdrawn; every thing is become more regular, and every man stands upon his own foundation. There is one harmonious system in the moral as in the natural world, though we cannot often perceive it; there is nothing that goes by chance in the one case more than in the other. Sincere prayer produces blessings, and a pure intention occasions confidence in the Divine protection. Tertullian (in his *Apology*) exclaims, "We look up to Heaven with outstretched hands, because they are harmless; with naked heads, because we are not ashamed."

The influence of religion produces a disposition for prayer, and prayer occasions an increase of religion. Public worship is useful to excite a pious feeling; but the extreme of feeling is injurious — it leads to fanaticism and disorder. The influence of music in devotion is exceedingly powerful. The effect is described in the following anonymous but delightful lines: —

"When music and devotion join,
The way to Canaan pleasant is;
We travel on with songs divine,
Ravish'd with sacred ecstasies:
No longer do we pass
Through a dry, barren wilderness,
But through a land where milk and honey flow;
The path to heav'n above leads through a heav'n
below."

A belief in the existence of a God — a supreme Governor and Judge — is the first principle of religion; without this no man can be depended on. Many persons are better than their principles; but if they have on any occasion a strong inducement to act unfairly, what is there to check them if they do not believe in a future judgment? The Christian is convinced that he will be rewarded according to his works; he has, therefore, a regulating principle, — a principle which would cause him to act justly when no human eye perceived his conduct. Nothing is more reasonable than a belief in a “great First Cause.” — “I had rather,” observes Lord Bacon, “believe all the fables in the Legend, the Talmud, and the Koran, than that this universal frame is without a mind.” A belief in God is frequently the introduction to a trust in him; and this is consolatory in the hour of trouble. How much better is it than the vain and impious disposition of the Constable of Bourbon, which prompted him to take for his motto, “*Spes omnis in ferro sita est*?” — All my hope is placed in the sword.

Virtue and piety are the result of practice. The acquirement of a new habit is exceedingly tedious: in this case, Dr. Beattie observes, “Criminal habits must be overcome; and this is a work of long and difficult labour.” — “No virtue,” says the excellent Dr. Barrow, “is acquired in an instant; but by degrees, step by step; from the seeds of right resolution it springs up, and grows forward by a continual process of customary practice.” And when

it has been gained, there must be a continual care to preserve it. "Even so," observes the Professor of Aberdeen, "virtue may be a warfare; but it is, upon the whole, happy as well as honourable, and never fails to be crowned with victory and eternal peace."

But no man is perfect, absolutely or relatively; virtue is accompanied by inconsistencies, and these are a species of vice. Virtue and vice are rivals; the one endeavours to conquer the other; and as soon as one is driven back, the other takes its place.

"Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring;
Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers;
The adder hisses when the sweet birds sing;
What virtue breeds, iniquity devours."

SHAKESPEARE.

They are so closely united on some occasions, that we can scarcely distinguish the one from the other. Thomson says, —

— "It cannot be deny'd,
That virtue still some tincture has of vice,
And vice of virtue."

But there is an infinitely higher authority, which says, "There is none perfect;" and Jesus Christ has given us a prayer, which is appropriate for every person, in which we beg that our trespasses may be forgiven.

The influence of virtue and piety is not confined to any particular part of the globe, but it is extended into every country; even the poor barbarian may be sometimes moved to worship the Great Spirit, —

——“ Who, in clouds,
And storms, in mountain caves, and by the fall
Of waters, in the woodland solitude,
And in the night and silence of the sky,
Doth make his being felt.”

BARTON.

But vice is very extensive in its influence. Man is not what he was: he is like an edifice constructed from the ruins of some splendid palace. He is composed of ill-assorted parts; his moral faculties are defective; he not only mistakes error for truth, but he sometimes perceives what is wrong and embraces it. Vice is disgraceful in the same proportion as virtue is ennobling. “Vice,” observes, Dr. Beattie, “is neither honourable nor happy, and it necessarily ends in punishment.” Plato, in his Republic, says, — “Those wretches who have never experienced the sweets of wisdom and virtue, but spend all their time in revels and debauches, sink downwards day after day, and make their whole life one continued series of errors.” Plutarch wrote a piece to prove that vice must necessarily occasion unhappiness. Vice is a present enjoyment for a future pain: it may be either sensual or mental. Armstrong exclaims, with regard to the sensualist, —

“ Infatuate, impious epicure ! to waste
The stores of pleasure, cheerfulness, and health !
Infatuate all, who make delight their trade,
And coy perdition every hour pursue.”

And Shakspeare, in very poetical language, refers to the man who risks his future happiness for fame: —

“ A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy ;
Who buys a minute’s mirth, to wail a week ?
Or sells eternity, to gain a toy ?”

Vice produces remorse. There is a striking instance of this kind in Macbeth, who being alarmed with the recollection of his crimes, anxiously enquired of his physician, —

“ Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Rase out the written troubles of the brain;
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?”

It is said of Nero, that he was continually terrified with the sound of trumpets coming from his mother's tomb. Sometimes vice induces a man to stupify himself with excessive drinking. The brutal Jeffreys killed himself with drinking brandy; and he drank it in order to drown his conscience.

As the Supreme Being frequently rewards virtue in this life, so he punishes vice. But we must not take this as an universal rule; because Montaigne somewhere remarks, that three of the worst men which he had ever known finished their days in prosperity. David made a complaint of a similar kind; while some of the ancient and modern infidels have taken it as a pretence that there is no God. When the wicked go unpunished, it may be because the Almighty will not humble them; and thus they will receive a greater condemnation. But the natural effect of vice, except to the hardened sinner, is unhappiness; and in many instances the Almighty has thought fit to show his judgment in anticipation, or previously to the last great day. Josephus says of the Jews, that there never was a people more wicked; and there never was a nation

that suffered so much. How often is it that ill-gotten treasures are snatched from a man, that he may not enjoy them ! The Spaniards robbed the Americans, but their plunder was lost at sea ; and almost all the actors in that bloody scene came to an untimely end. When Pyrrhus had stripped the temple of Proserpine of its treasure, he sent it by sea ; and a great storm came on, which caused all the vessels to be wrecked.

It may be enquired, how is it that the Almighty does not always set a mark of infamy on vice ? This may be answered by two sufficient reasons : if he did so, men would be so much ruled by fear, and the evidence of their senses, that they would possess no freedom for moral actions, and no occasion for faith. Besides, if the judgments of the Supreme Being were given on the earth, they would be imparted according to the nature of the crime, and in the exact proportion which the action merited ; hence, there would be no room and no occasion for a future judgment.

Repentance is the only means of obtaining the pardon and favour of the Deity ; but repentance is not a remuneration for past offences. The Almighty has connected one with the other ; but it is the mercy of God, through the Mediator, which absolves a man from the penalty of his crimes. This repentance is more consistent and effective when a man is sound in body and in mind. A repentance on a death-bed, or what may appear to be the bed of a dying man, is not always to be depended on as genuine. It arises not so much from love of piety, as fear of punishment ; and if

he returns again to health and vigour, he generally returns to folly. A priest having, on one occasion, visited a sick man, and found by his conversation that he was serious and devout, refused to pray that he might recover ; for he thought it would be better for him to die, than to live and go back to the world. If religion is the gift of God, it is hardly likely that the Almighty would impart what he knew would be only temporary. Is the Deity so inconsistent as to suffer himself to be trifled with, and so blind as not to know what will happen ? Jeremy Taylor says, “ that repentance on a death-bed is like washing a corpse ; it makes it cleanly, but the change is no deeper than the skin.”

Sometimes a man endeavours to absolve himself from the penalty of his crimes by the practice of benevolence and other virtues ; but these are necessary at all times. The miser, when an uneasy conscience prevents him from resting tranquilly on his dying pillow, makes endowments for institutions of a charitable and religious nature, as if the favour of the Almighty could be purchased for money ! Even Plato was sufficiently enlightened to exclaim, “ What must the gods think of a gift from the impious, when a good man would blush to receive a present from a wicked person ?” Without doubt these legacies have been beneficial to mankind, but they have probably been of little use to the donor : the gifts of wicked men have been said, by the Deity, to be an insult.

Virtue, then, is lovely and contributive to happiness ; vice is hateful and productive of present or

future misery. Virtue or vice may be increased by practice; a step in either frequently leads to a further progress. The one is never repented of; the other is the cause of regret. The highest sort of virtue, or piety, is necessary for the favour of the Almighty; it is in him "we live, and move, and have our being." It is infinitely better to be under the protection of the Supreme Being, than to make him our enemy by a continual violation of his laws.

CHAP. IV.

ON REASONABLE BELIEF AND SUPERSTITION.

A REASONABLE belief is that which is consistent with the experience of mankind, and the testimony of authentic writings; it leads to virtue and happiness: but superstition goes beyond the boundary of reason, and chooses tradition, credulity, and timidity for its guides: the result is almost always inconsistency, vice, and misery. Superstition has led men into error with regard to the Deity, the operations of Providence, the nature of the human mind, the condition of man, religious worship, fortunate days, witchcraft, magic, omens, charms, spells, and many other matters, to which I shall now attend.

The disputes which have prevailed among Christians on the nature of the Deity, might be all settled and harmonised, by taking for our guide the confession of St. Bernard: — “I know that God is incomprehensible to me, for I cannot comprehend myself.” We may conclude that he is good, for he must be so of necessity; evil and perfection cannot dwell together. He must be perfect, otherwise he could not be infinite; and he must be infinite, else he is no God: and if we fancy there is no Supreme Ruler, then every thing sprang into being of itself; that is, every thing began to make

itself before it began to exist; or, in other words, nothing made something, which is the greatest miracle that could possibly be conceived! We may, therefore, believe, in the language of the Scripture, that "his tender mercies are over all his works;" and that, although a dark cloud sometimes hangs over human affairs, yet the only object of the Deity in creating man was to make him happy. God needed not enjoyment; but the end of all his works is happiness; that happiness, therefore, must be intended for his creatures.

Many absurd opinions have arisen respecting the operations of Divine Providence in the regulation of human affairs: this, Dr. Beattie very properly observes, is the foundation of a great many other superstitions; for "to believe that the Almighty governs the world, not by his own eternal rules of rectitude, but by caprice and humour, which are perpetually changing; and that he admits of other beings, and some of the most contemptible that can be conceived, to share with him in that government, makes men superstitious with regard to dreams, omens, witches, spectres, enchantments, and other ridiculous things." To this it may be added, that religious worship, and the general conduct of mankind, are very much affected by the same cause. Into what absurdities have many ignorant persons been carried, by a mistaken notion of Divine illumination! The Supreme Being certainly does enlighten the minds of men; but we must not fancy that he influences and guides them as far as they sometimes go, otherwise all the superstition in the world must be attributed to the

Almighty. Let an opinion, however absurd it may be, enter the heads of some ignorant men, and let the possessors of it fancy that there is some small portion of good to be derived from it, and they will run immediately into extravagance, and contend that they are enlightened by the Fountain of wisdom. Obstinacy and pretended infallibility are the most prominent traits in these illuminated persons. Butler says, rather humorously, but correctly, —

“ Whate’er men speak by this new light,
Still they are sure to be i’ th’ right;
’Tis a dark lantern of the Spirit,
Which none see by but those that bear it.”

It occasions men who are thus deceived not only to be zealous for their newly-acquired absurdities, but it makes them anxious to break down all law and system which had been popular in former days; and thus, in opposing superstition, they become superstitious. Selden says, “ They who are against superstition are apt to run into it on the other side. If I wear all colours but black, then I am superstitious in not wearing black.” The author that I have already quoted ridiculed the bigots of his day, with much wit and no little severity: —

“ The oyster-women lock’d their fish up,
And trudg’d away to cry — No bishop!
Botchers left old clothes in the lurch,
And fell to turn and patch the church.
Some cry’d the covenant, instead
Of pudding, pies, and gingerbread;
And some for brooms, old boots, and shoes,
Bawl’d out to purge the Commons’ house.”

Zeal and good sense are invaluable; but zeal without knowledge, zeal among fanatical and superstitious men, is exceedingly injurious. Many of the systems, however, which these people condemned, merit the censure of every reasonable man in the present day; but when the mob take any thing in hand, they perform it clumsily; and in every popular measure the worst characters make the most noise, to the injury of the cause which they advocate.

Miracle-working has been generally a subject of great interest among the superstitious. Josephus declared, that he saw the devil drawn out of an old woman, by the application of Solomon's seal to her nose. The touch of a king has been deemed influential in driving away maladies. In the year 1664, Charles II. issued a proclamation, declaring it to be his royal will and pleasure, "to continue the healing of his people for the Evil during the month of May." Kings have not often been nursing fathers of their people with regard to knowledge and common sense. Alfred was an exception; but knowledge has sprung generally from the lower ranks, in the same way as the vapours which ascend into the heavens, and exhibit their beauty, and descend and water the earth, generally arise from low and obscure places. Tacitus relates, that Vespasian cured a man of blindness (through the influence of the god Serapis) by wetting his eyes with spittle. The dead body of a malefactor has also been deemed of extraordinary virtue. The holy cross, and the sign of the cross, have been imagined to possess a wonderful faculty

of curing all manner of diseases. St. Austin affirmed, that he saw a woman cured of cancer by the sign of the cross, which was made on her by a person recently baptized. The shrines and the tombs of saints have been supposed very beneficial in removing bodily maladies. The interesting, though sadly abused, remains at Jerusalem; the tomb of Mahomet, and a thousand other places, have been wonderfully useful in this way. On one occasion, however, a competition arose (as it will sometimes among those of the same profession), between the shrines of St. Germaine and St. Martin at Auxerre. The quarrels of learned and merely human doctors are a great inconvenience to simple persons, who put their trust in them; but the disagreement of saintly doctors must be exceedingly perplexing. This discord, however, originated with the priests in dividing the spoils. It has been said, that men are superior in rank to some kinds of immaterial beings, and that they can call them from the "vasty deep;" there is no reason, therefore, that men should not possess some kind of influence over saints that are dead and gone; and hence the holy relics were obliged to comply with the whims of their earthly masters. It was agreed, as a trial of skill, that a leprous man should be placed exactly between the rival shrines, and, strange to say, the side which was towards St. Martin's was cured, while the other remained diseased; the man was turned, and the other side became sound. At a convent in Spain it was an annual custom for a monk to go into an oven, and to remain there, baking, for three or four hours;

and then he would come out in the sight of all the people uninjured ! It is questionable whether the spectators did not require baking as much as the monk. What miracles have been performed with the blood of different saints, with bits of the holy cross, with locks of hair, with thigh-bones, and even with toe-nails ! The number of these relics has been almost beyond credibility. There has been enough of the cross exhibited at different times to build a first-rate man of war ; and there were seven thigh-bones of St. Anthony existing in various places at the same time.

Superstition and ignorance encouraged the ancient miracle-working, and they favour the modern system of quackery. A medicine is introduced for the purpose of curing certain diseases, but the inventor wishes to increase the sale of it, and he warrants it to cure every kind of malady. If a new species of disease arise, totally distinct from the rest, it will cure that also. Now, if a medicine be adapted for all disorders, it will be hurtful to none ; but if it hurt none, it will be useless to all. If there be any cure performed, they will be magnified and published throughout the land. When Diagoras visited the temple of Samothrace, he was shown a long catalogue of persons who had been saved from shipwreck by the influence of the gods ; he was shown, also, the amount of the offerings ; and the priests enquired, " Who will deny that our gods are the governors of the world, when so many are preserved ? "—" Bring me," replied the visiter, " an account of those who have perished by shipwreck, and then I will give you an answer."

And thus the quack exclaims, when a list of cures is exhibited, "Who will deny the virtue of my medicine, when so many are healed?" But he keeps the thousands who have tried it uselessly behind the curtain; and many of these, perhaps, through the virtue of this nostrum, have been deposited in the tomb. Sir Kenelm Digby fancied he had discovered a sympathetic powder, which would cure diseases, although the person were a thousand miles from the medicine!

Experiments equally ridiculous with those which have been mentioned have been employed for the soul. Some of these were well intended, but they were injudicious; and they have been adopted as brutal and degrading practices among the ignorant and hypocritical. Of this sort are flagellations, hair-shirts, pilgrimages, and tedious repetitions of words and sentences. A Japanese woman, while she remained among pagans, was accustomed to repeat the name of Amida 140,000 times in a day and night; and after her conversion to popery, she altered it into Maria, which name she repeated as frequently. It is extremely ridiculous for a person to be laboriously and tediously employed about what is as useless as the noise of a mill, or the cackling of a goose. There seems to be sometimes a sort of mechanical uneasiness in the human mind, a person knows not how or why, which is just as mechanically counteracted. This uneasiness is removed by actual labour or pain, and this is generally the origin of mortification and penance. A man may suffer labour and privation, but an uneasy spirit he cannot bear. True and

rational piety, however, is much more efficacious, and much more conducive to the good of society, than such ridiculous practices. Montaigne alludes to the custom of enduring penance in his day : — “Do we not,” he enquires, “every Good Friday, in several places, see great numbers of men and women beat and whip themselves, till they lacerate and cut the flesh to the very bones? This I have often seen.” Sometimes penance is practised for the sole purpose of mortifying the body ; and then, however injudicious it might be as an universal practice, it may be beneficial in particular cases. Chateaubriand says of the Maronite monks at Thebais, — “They dwelt in narrow cells, and wore, like Paul their founder, robes made of the leaves of palm-trees ; others were habited in cloth woven of the hair of the antelope ; some, like Zeno, merely threw the skins of wild beasts over their shoulders ; while Seraphion the anchoret appeared wrapped in the shroud which was to cover him in the grave.”

Image worship is generally useless and objectionable. The origin, like that of many other customs, was probably well intended, but injudicious. The form of a person in marble or silver, or the resemblance on canvass, might exhibit very powerfully the character and actions of the original ; but it is likely to confine the mind to these likenesses, so that when the eyes are not employed in viewing them, the mind will not be engaged in thinking of them. Temples and dwellings have been dedicated to saints, the image of whom has

been placed within them. Books have been inscribed to the same worthy personages; even Bayle, — who was afterwards guilty of the other extreme, — published a work in his early days, and dedicated it to the Virgin Mary; the likeness of which lady was placed as an ornament in the titlepage. Sometimes a superstitious feeling, acquired in education, will induce a person to act agreeably with it, when his judgment is more enlightened. It is very difficult to eradicate early impressions from the mind.

Dr. M'Crie, in his *Life of Knox*, has given an amusing story, which exhibits the character of the period to which it belongs, — the superstition of the people, the coercive disposition of the higher powers, and the bold spirit of an individual. "One day, a fine painted image of the Virgin was brought into one of the galleys, and a Scotch prisoner (one of the Reformers) was desired to give it a kiss of adoration. He refused, saying, that such idols were accursed, and he would not touch it. 'But you shall,' replied one of the officers roughly, thrusting it in his face, and placing it between his hands. Upon this he took hold of the image, and, watching his opportunity, threw it into the river, saying, 'Let our Ladie now save herself; sche is licht enoughe, lat her leirne to swyme.'"

It has been observed, that the origin of image-worship might have been well intended; and the effects are certainly sometimes beneficial, — it serves to generate devotion. Bernard Barton says, with an amiable liberality, —

“ Ave-maria, crucifix, and bead,
 Are nothing in themselves ; but if they were
 Imagined helpful in the votary's need,
 Although a faith more spiritual may spare
 Such outward aids to seek, from blame it may forbear.”

But the legitimate method in such a case, is to calculate the full amount of benefit and disadvantage, and then to decide by the prevailing sum. Upon this plan, the pomp, ceremony, and idolatry of the Romish Church must be condemned. However, a certain degree of show and magnificence is not amiss in public service; and it is particularly influential on the ignorant. Their passions must be somewhat excited, and their senses must be attracted. In Coromandel, the converts that were made by Schwartz very frequently went over to the Popish Church, being attracted by the processions, charms, music, paintings, &c. The holy communion among the Roman Catholics is exceedingly imposing; it is received amidst blazing tapers, fragrant incense, solemn music, and a gorgeous display of gold and silver. These things may be carried too far; but it is an evil also to run to the opposite extreme.

A very silly method existed in the early ages, and this has continued almost to the present time; indeed, it may exist now among persons who possess but little judgment, — namely, that of calculating events from chance readings in the heathen poets and the Scriptures. This practice of sortilege was calculated to make men presume or despair. If a chance passage—the first which the eye perceived when a book was opened—happened to be

favourable, the person was delighted ; if the opposite, he was sorrowful. Sometimes the passage would allow no kind of connection with the events which were expected ; and then the imagination would interpret it agreeably with its own inclination : if the mind were cheerful, it would be explained favourably ; and if gloomy, it would receive an unfavourable explanation. If the Deity had chosen to communicate knowledge to men of future occurrences, could he not, and would he not, have adopted some shorter and more definite method ?

Many absurd opinions have been held respecting angelic beings. Some persons have supposed that they are appointed to regulate all the affairs of the world ; and thus the influence of Providence would be useless. It has been maintained, by some Roman Catholic writers, that guardian angels preside as governors over particular towns and cities ; and some have pretended that every man is accompanied by a guardian spirit, which regulates his conduct. As there is an evil influence in the world, they conclude that fallen angels are allowed to annoy mankind. These opinions would occasion many absurdities in theory and in practice ; it would lessen our dependence on the Supreme Governor, and occasion mankind to apply for assistance to their immediate guardians ; it would produce a fear of bodily injury from evil spirits ; and it would cherish many of the superstitions which prevail among the vulgar.

I have already intimated, that the extreme departure from superstition will lead a person into

superstition ; and this may be seen in the case of persons who have been sceptical in religion, but superstitious in other matters. Many a man among the heathen, who disbelieved the existence of the gods, was influenced by lucky numbers, fortunate days, omens, and dreams. Julian the Apostate admitted the miracles of Christ, and yet denied the authority of the Christian doctrine. Some, when they were attacked by sickness, ran into the extreme of folly. Tullus Hostilius was an unbeliever ; but the loss of health, with attendant gloominess of mind, induced him to practise many superstitions. In a later period we find Hobbes and others, who pretended to rise above the popular belief, and yet they sunk into folly and timidity. It was observed by Sorbière, as a proof of the contiguity of extremes, that many persons, after they have ridiculed physicians, on a sudden give an entire credit to the pretensions of a quack, and suffer themselves to be deceived by his arts.

There was a great deal of superstition among the Greeks and the Romans ; and this superstition has been handed down, in many respects, though not in form, yet in degree, to the present day. The Ancients held many absurd notions of the Deity ; but the Moderns have taught what is equally ridiculous. How many, and how various, have been the opinions of men on the nature of the Supreme Being ! This shows the necessity of a Revelation. According to Zoroaster, time was the creator of all things ; Parmenides believed that God was a circle surrounding all creation ; Aristotle, that he was the soul of the world ; Empe-

docles, that the four elements were God; the Egyptians believed that Cnef, the Supreme Being, was obscurity and darkness; the Peruvians, that he was the sun; and Zeno maintained that God was the law of nature. But Seneca, like St. Bernard, acknowledged that he knew not the nature of the Almighty.

Nations in different parts of the world, and in different ages, have worshipped various deities; as if the jurisdiction of the Almighty did not extend throughout all creation. The Babylonians worshipped Baal; the Delphians, Apollo; the Egyptians, Osiris; the Thebans, Serapis, &c. Heathens have raised altars innumerable to their deities; and Infidels have erected them to the virtues. If the worship of the Almighty is deemed inconsistent by the despisers of Christianity, how ridiculous must it be to build altars and offer up addresses to an abstract character or quality! This justifies the assertion which has been frequently made, that no one exhibits more inconsistency, credulity, or superstition, than may be found in a complete infidel.

Idolaters have generally imagined that the gods which were formed out of wood and stone, became divine as soon as they were finished by the sculptor. The same opinion seems to have been held by the Roman Catholics respecting saints. Sir Jonah Barrington says, that in Ireland a notion formerly prevailed, that a barrister, if he knew nothing of law, became, as soon as he was made a judge, a most excellent lawyer!

The Greeks adopted an ingenious method for deifying their heroes. They placed the body on a

huge pile of wood, in the form of a pyramid, which they set on fire; and, when the flames began to play around the corpse, a dove was liberated, which immediately ascended into the heavens beyond the reach of human vision; and this was intended as an illustration of the ascent of the spirit among the gods! When Æneas was drowned, his friends concealed the body, and made the Trojans believe he had suddenly vanished, that they might induce the superstitious to worship him as a god; this artifice succeeded, and a temple was erected to his memory. Empedocles leapt into Ætna for a similar reason; but, unfortunately, one of his iron sandals was driven out by the flames, and thus his countrymen knew where he was gone. The Roman Catholics have adopted ingenious methods in the canonisation of saints. The Ghebers, or fire-worshippers of the East, used to build temples over subterranean fires; and thus they could show a perpetual miracle! In almost every part of the globe there are holy places; which character has arisen from some pretended circumstance of a miraculous kind. Thus there are holy cells and caverns in Scythia, Scandinavia, and Ethiopia; the Persians and Arabians have their holy mountains; the Druids had their sacred groves and oaks.

A mistaken notion frequently prevails of the judgments of the Almighty. Like the disciples in the time of Christ, who pretended to account for the falling of a tower in Siloam, people in the present day too often pretend to call this or that a judgment for a particular crime. There are common events, under the general sufferance of Pro-

vidence, — such as famine, storms, pestilence, &c. — which no one should have the temerity to speculate about, or pretend to explain. These evils fall on the virtuous and the vicious; on the man that feareth God, and him that feareth Him not; they affect the poor rather than the rich, but the poor are not more wicked; why, then, may we deem them judgments? We should never pretend to know above what we are taught in the Scriptures. This notion has prevailed among Heathen, Mahomedans, and Christians. When Diagoras was sailing in a vessel during a terrible storm, the sailors exclaimed that they were punished by the gods, because they had taken an infidel on board. “Look now,” said Diagoras, “at those ships which are not far distant; am I on board all of them?” A Portuguese, being in danger of shipwreck, took a little child and placed it on his shoulders, that the innocence of the infant might counterbalance his own offences, and save him!

Astrological calculations have been much resorted to in the darker ages of the world; but the patrons of these fooleries would have been less numerous, if the Scythian law, which condemned all false prophets to death, had been universal. Charles Ist was a firm believer in astrology. Almost every thing, at one time, was to be performed agreeably with planetary calculations. Butler says of these worthy star-gazers, —

“ They ’ll feel the pulses of the stars,
To find out agues, coughs, catarrhs;
And tell what crisis does divine
The rot in sheep, or mange in swine.”

Even Dryden calculated nativities. Aristander acted much more wisely with regard to predictions; he concluded that this or that might be, from present events. He foretold that Lysimachus, one of Alexander's life-guards, would be raised to the throne; but he thought so from the aspiring disposition of that soldier. Louis XI. was afraid to discharge his physician, because the man had said that the king would die eight days after his dismissal. And another monarch, having condemned an astrologer to death, laughed at him, because he had not foreseen his own fate. "I have foreseen," he replied, "that the period of my decease is to be exactly three days before that of your Majesty." This ingenious reply preserved his life. The prediction referred to by Josephus must have arisen from something much more definite than chance conjecture. Before Titus besieged Jerusalem, a man walked about the city and cried, — "A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem, and against the temple; a voice against the bridegroom and against the bride; a voice against all the people!" And he never ceased to utter the same doleful predictions, though he was severely scourged for it. When the enemy arrived at the gates, he went round the walls and cried, — "Wo! wo to the city! wo to the people! wo to the temple!" and then,—"Wo to myself!" and immediately a stone from one of the enemy's machines struck him, and he fell down dead.

Superstitious practices have been adopted by some men as a guide to future conduct. Dejotarus,

Tetrarch of Galatea, was addicted to auguries; he undertook no journey, nor any important engagement, without consulting the flight of birds or the entrails of beasts. When a disposition of this kind is established in the human mind, it can scarcely be removed by the strongest evidences of its folly; for a failure is attributed to any thing rather than to the system itself. Dejotarus imagined that he was warned by various auguries to support Pompey in his contest with Cæsar; and, although he found that the gods advocated the cause of Cæsar, and suffered his own party to be vanquished, and his kingdom to be lost, yet he maintained that they were good auguries, and that the fault must be attributed to some other cause. Cicero has said, agreeably with the superstitions of that period, — “*Multa cernunt haruspices; multa augures provident; multa oraculis declarantur; multa vaticinationibus, multa somniis, multa portentis; quibus cognitis, multæ sæpe res hominum sententia atque utilitate partæ, multa pericula depulsa sunt.*” (*De Nat. Deorum.*) “Soothsayers foretell many events; and many events are described by oracles, divinations, dreams, and prodigies; by which good and useful actions may be performed, and many dangers avoided.”

In all countries, and in all ages, men have been conscious of demerit; and they have been impressed with the thought that the Deity must be propitiated; — hence, the sacrifices of beasts and human beings; and hence, also, the array of pomp and splendour; which magnificence they deemed to be worthy of the presiding deities. The altars

were beautifully adorned with gold and flowers; the priests were dressed in white, with golden girdles; the sacrificial vessels were made of precious metals; and the air was perfumed with the richest fragrance. The Egyptians frequently offered sacrifices, and so did the Israelites; but the latter were commanded to do so by the Jewish law. Julian the Apostate sacrificed an incredible number of oxen; and the Lacedæmonians made an offering to the Muses before they engaged in battle, that their valorous deeds might be enrolled in the annals of fame. The Moldavians used to launch a small vessel stored with the most costly perfume, as an offering to the god of the winds. The most usual sacrifice is that of beasts; and this is not particularly objectionable, especially if the mode of killing them be not tedious and cruel: though it is useless; for the blood of bulls or of goats cannot take away sin: but the practice of human sacrifice is shocking. Even this land has frequently been stained with the blood of persons who have been murdered in the cause of idolatry. Infants and men have been inhumanly butchered in the rocky recesses, and among the murky scenes of our own forests; cruelty and priestcraft have tyrannised over the deluded or the resisting victim; while the groans of the sufferer have mingled with the murmuring of the rolling waters, and the ghastly spectacle has added a deeper shade to the surrounding scenery. Darkness and death, ignorance and idolatry, fanaticism and cruelty, have been united in the worship of our barbarous predecessors. The Mexicans used to sacrifice a great number of persons every

year to the gods. The Getæ despatched a man once in five years to their god Zamolxis; they usually threw him into the air, and received him, when falling, on the points of their javelins. Amestris, the mother of Xerxes, caused fourteen young men of noble family to be buried alive as an offering to the gods! Sacrifices are sometimes made as an acknowledgment of a benefit received; but it is contrary to all reason and humanity, if the sacrifice be made to consist of some indifferent person, as the result of a vow. When Idomeneus was returning from the Trojan war, he was in imminent danger of shipwreck; and he vowed, that if the gods would preserve him, he would offer up the first human being that he might see on the Cretan shore: the first was his son, who came to welcome him; and the superstitious father sacrificed him to his imprudent vow.

Witchcraft, magic, and charms, have been popular among the ignorant, and much practised by the artful. It would seem rather repugnant to reason, that people should have been condemned to die for the alleged practice of these follies; but, if a man pretended to be a wizard, or a woman a witch, and thereby affected the happiness and lives of mankind, they deserved to be punished. Not only have people imagined that others are endowed with magical powers, but many have supposed that they themselves maintain an intercourse with the devil and evil spirits. Agreeably with this superstition, Hecate says in *Macbeth*, —

“ Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;

I'll catch it ere it come to ground ;
And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprights,
As, by the strength of their illusion,
Shall draw him on to his confusion."

Magical and cunning men have frequently practised upon the simple,

" When cattle feel indisposition,
And need the opinion of physician ;
When murrain reigns in hogs or sheep,
And chickens languish of the pip :
When yeast and outward means do fail,
And have no powers to work on ale ;
And butter does refuse to come,
And love proves cross and humoursome ;"

BUTLER.

then they furnish some receipt, couched in outlandish phraseology — as if Egyptian or Arabic were more effectual than Saxon or English, and as if evil spirits knew the one better than the other ; and this will remove difficulties, and make the course of all things smooth and even.

When John Zisca was about to die, he ordered that his skin should be tanned and made into a drum. Now, this Zisca had gained many engagements against the Bohemians ; and he fancied, that any part of him on the field of battle would do something towards insuring success for his countrymen. The Athenians were superstitious, in requiring the immediate burial of their countrymen who were slain in battle. Two or three generals who omitted this, for the purpose of pursuing their success against the enemy, were put to death.

Food has been made a cause of superstition. The Puritans would not eat plum-pudding or minced pies at Christmas. Cardinal Beaton induced the Regent of Scotland to hang four persons at Perth, for eating goose on Friday! Some people are superstitious with regard to number; they will not allow themselves to form one of thirteen at a meal, because Jesus Christ and his disciples happened to consist of that number. Some are alarmed, if they put their left stocking on in the morning before their right one; and if a hare cross them in the road, they are ready to faint. They believe that the appearance of a raven, a crow, or an owl, is indicative of evil. Many persons, in other respects sensible, believe in the efficacy of charms, spells, &c. Some people will perform no important engagement on a Friday. Some of the Ancients had similar notions with respect to particular times. When Alexander was arrived on the banks of the Granicus, and within sight of Darius, some objected to an engagement, because the Macedonian monarchs had never gone to war in the month Dæsius; Alexander immediately caused the name to be altered to the second Artemasius. Some folks tremble if they overset or spill salt; and if they break a looking-glass, they fancy they are ruined. The Jews were superstitious with regard to the Sabbath; but they suffered on account of it; for, on several occasions, their enemies attacked and beat them on that day. The Egyptians believed that particular kinds of beasts were sacred; and these they would not injure on any account. When Cambyzes besieged

Pelusium, he put a great many of these animals in the front of his army; and as the Egyptians did not dare to attack the besiegers, lest the sacred beasts should be injured, the city became an easy prey. In Mecca it would be deemed sinful, in the present day, to kill any of the blue pigeons which are numerous in that city. This superstition arose, because it was supposed that Mahomed had received communications from heaven through the medium of a dove. The fact is, that deceiver used to put grains of wheat in his ears; and when the dove pecked at them, the people thought it was a divine communication; and when the dove swallowed them, they fancied it was a sort of mystical and inaudible speech. Such have been the devices of false prophets! It is said of Swedenborg, that he withdrew himself from the body, that he might discover the abodes of departed spirits, and then he returned to life; when the latter occurred, he was surrounded by such an odour as was never perceived before.

The hands and fingers have been deemed indicative of good or evil fortune. Cardan pretended that black and livid specks on the middle finger of the hand signified sorrow; on the forefinger, honour; on the thumb, riches; on the ring-finger, discoveries of great importance; on the little finger, inventions of a trifling nature. Sneezing has been deemed a prognostic of an early death. In Athens, when any of the company sneezes, Laurent observes, all who are present greet him with *Πόλλα ἐτῆ*, — “May you live many years!” Pietro delle Valle mentions a cere-

money among the Persians : — “ A number of young ladies of the party lighted each a wax candle, which, after carrying until they were tired, they placed in sconces, suffering them to burn throughout the night, and taking especial care that they should not be extinguished ; as such a misfortune might be deemed ominous for her to whom the taper might belong, foreboding either a state of single blessedness, or some other great misfortune.” In Rome, the women, both noble and plebeian, were continually anxious in searching out omens for marriage.

Sometimes a phenomenon in the heavens has struck a superstitious terror into men. Milton says of the sun, when it is eclipsed, —

“ Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon-
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations ; and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.”

The aurora borealis, or a meteor passing rapidly through the heavens, has occasioned a similar effect. Sometimes unusual noises have been deemed a prognostic of approaching evils. Lenox says to Macbeth, just before the discovery of Duncan’s murder, —

“ The night has been unruly ; where we lay
Our chimneys were blown down ; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i’ the air ; strange screams of death,
And prophecyings, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confused events,
New hatch’d to the woful time. The obscure bird
Clamour’d the livelong night ; some say, the earth
Was feverous, and did shake.”

In many instances, causes and effects are joined together, when they have no natural connection; trifles are thought momentous, while more important things are disregarded. The ancient Tartars conceived it sinful to put a knife into the fire, to beat a horse with his bridle, or to lean upon a whip; but they thought it no great harm to commit murder. The inhabitants of Formoso believe that all who have searched for oysters, or begun an undertaking without consulting the song of birds, have committed a grievous offence; but drunkenness and many other vices they allow. In ancient Greece, the priests maintained, that all who spoke disrespectfully of the mysteries were guilty of an unpardonable offence; and they believed that such persons, in another world, would be rolled in mire and dirt; but they objected not to many heinous crimes. The Magians require a man, if he would please the Deity, never to throw water on a fire, nor to place his bare foot on the ground. The Roman Catholics, also, have made trivial things criminal, and important things trifling. Among other matters, they formerly maintained that a man might swear falsely without risk; but if he swore falsely by the holy cross, he would die within a year. Crimes, according to their system, might be removed by absolution, or anticipated by an indulgence. The scapula was one of the greatest superstitions of any age or country. This, which consisted of two bits of cloth fastened to a piece of tape, and thrown over the head so as to allow one bit to lie on the breast, and the other on the back, was deemed infallible in procuring and preserving

the favour of God. Mr. Boswell mentions a very singular and superstitious practice of Dr. Johnson; which consisted of an "anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage by a certain number of steps from a certain point; or, at least, so that either his right or his left foot (I am not certain which) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture, for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected, or gone wrong in, this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion." This could not have originated in a religious feeling; for the good sense of that eminent man would have prevented him from such absurdity; but it probably arose from a habit of calculating, with a gratification in computing distance correctly, and in discovering the exact manner in which a walk of a short distance would be terminated. But this, which at first was trifling and playful, might have become (owing to the morbid state of his mind) a matter of duty or conscience. The most sensible men will sometimes act foolishly; and if every one were to search narrowly into his opinions and habits, he would discover that something might be disposed of consistently with good sense. Whatever is contrary to reason and revelation, is injurious in a greater or lesser degree. It will diminish the happiness of

the person who indulges it, and those who are connected with him : a man does not live alone ; there are few things that one person can do, which will not affect, directly or indirectly, the happiness of others.

CHAP. V.

ON ENTHUSIASM AND MODERATION.

ENTHUSIASM is a principle which stimulates mankind to great and uncommon actions; it arises from the passions rather than the judgment; it is useful for important occurrences, but it is not necessary for steady and uniform engagements: for enthusiasm is generally the result of excitation; if the mind, therefore, be strained on one occasion, it will be proportionably relaxed on another. If what has been related of Marcus Curtius be true, that he sacrificed himself to the gods for the good of his country, he must have been influenced by enthusiasm. Leonidas was excited by this principle, when he opposed himself with his little band against the countless multitude of Xerxes. Camillus was enthusiastic, when he begged the gods, during the prosperity of Rome, that if misfortunes must befall her as well as favours, they would be pleased to pour them on his shoulders and spare the city. It was a species of enthusiasm, and not less noble, though less important, that induced a young negress at Guadaloupe (as a missionary relates) to refuse marriage, because she would not bring others into misery. This principle may be directed to a good or a bad object; but in a good

object, if it be an engagement of a regular kind, we need not much enthusiasm, but a calm and steady attention to our duty. Socrates, Aristotle, or Pliny, had no occasion to be enthusiastic; nor should a great degree of enthusiasm be connected with religion. If any person, from ignorance or unusual circumstances, be affected by it, it should rather be mellowed down than increased; for all enthusiasm which carries a man out of the tract of reason and good order is fanaticism.

The health of the mind is something like the health of the body; but we do not improve the body by producing a fever-heat. Jacob Behmen, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Madame Bourignon, were fanatics and visionaries; but they perplexed the minds of men, and led their fellow creatures into error. The difference between fanaticism and moderation is like that between the boisterous gale and the temperate breeze, or the mountain torrent rolling without control, and the calm and beautiful river.

A small degree of animation is sometimes termed enthusiasm; but enthusiasm generally signifies a powerful ebullition of feeling; and in this sense I shall now consider it. A sensation, even of this kind, may be sometimes harmless; but it becomes hurtful when a person's actions are dependent on it. Man seems to have been intended for a comparatively tranquil state of being. If he strains his mental powers, he injures his health and reason; if he suffers his passions to be greatly excited, he goes astray and becomes miserable. He may, like Sophocles, die of joy; or, like Artemisia, of grief.

He may finish his days in a paroxysm of anger, or draw out his existence in despair and madness. But a proper training of the mind will contribute to knowledge and wisdom; a proper treatment of the body, to health and vigour; and a proper regulation of the passions, to tranquillity and happiness. These subjects, however, have been already investigated; I shall, therefore, examine enthusiasm in reference to its influence on morality and religion.

As much religion as would show a man his dependence on the Almighty, and teach him to admire the beauties of creation; and induce him, in all his observations, to "look from nature up to nature's God;" to act justly to his fellow creatures; to worship the Almighty sincerely and decorously; — all this will be necessary and advantageous; but it will be granted that this is not enthusiasm. It would be enthusiasm, when the pulpit-orator, carried away with the vastness and interest of his subject, would seem to soar above this earthly sphere — to rise into the region of the stars — to wing his way among the magnificent courts of heaven — to describe the beauty, the dazzling lustre, the enchantments of that blessed place. And thus the poet will be sometimes enthusiastic, when his "eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from earth to heaven." But the former may be an exception to the usual feelings of the minister, or he will soon unnerve himself by high excitement; and the poet, if he be not careful, will wear out the delicate connection between soul and body, and destroy his earthly frame. How many

persons of great promise have actually worn themselves out, and opened the portal of the tomb for an early residence, from the effects of high excitement!

Enthusiasm, or, as I shall sometimes term it, fanaticism in religion, has not been confined to modern times; it has existed in the early ages. It has arisen among idolaters and Christians; among priests and people; indeed, wherever men of weak heads and powerful feelings have possessed any influence in religious matters. The Fakhirs of India work themselves to a high degree of ecstasy by trumpets, drums, and other instruments; and then they prophesy, and perform all kinds of incoherent actions. The Caunians raise themselves to a pitch of religious frenzy; and then they brandish their swords to drive away strange gods. The Malays act in a similar manner. The Egyptians used to celebrate feasts at Bubastis, in honour of Diana, at which two or three hundred thousand persons were sometimes present; they drank wine, and sang, and danced, and became almost frantic. The Nephes Ogli among the Turks (a company of virgins who generally live in the strictest retirement) sometimes go to the mosques at night, and there they remain for several hours, and during their prayers they practise all kinds of bodily contortions; they howl, and dance, and talk incoherently, and at last fall on the ground in a state of exhaustion. Some of the fancied worshippers of the Almighty, in the present day, practise similar irregularities — so uniformly does fanaticism act

among barbarians and civilised, in the torrid and in the temperate zones !

But fanaticism is exceedingly deceptive and injurious ; “ it takes away,” as Locke observes, “ both reason and revelation ; and substitutes in their room the ungrounded fancies of a man’s own brain, and assumes them for a foundation both of opinion and conduct.” It is a bane to society, to good manners, to virtue, to religion ; it disorders worldly engagements, and destroys domestic comforts ; it fills a person with fears and boldness, with presumption and despair. It frequently arises from affectation and pride. Locke observes, that feelings of this kind “ so flatter men’s laziness, ignorance, and vanity, that when once they are got into this way of immediate revelation, of illumination without search, and of certainty without proof and examination, it is a hard matter to get them out of it.”

Almost every thing which a fanatic examines — whether it be practice or theory — is dressed up in deceptive colours. He goes too far in some things, and not far enough in others. Sometimes he will draw clouds and shadows around his fellow creatures ; and sometimes he will darken the character of the Most High ; — instead of brightening human prospects, agreeably with the rules of Scripture ; and making the character of the Deity luminous and attractive, according to the declarations of the Bible. On some occasions, he will talk incoherently of his own importance, of the beatific influence which is shed upon him, of the mighty actions which he has to perform. He is sometimes sin-

cere, but sincerity is not a sufficient warrant for his opinions and conduct, — if it were, no man who has acted agreeably with his perverted reason would be blamable. Perhaps it was his own fault that he became so erratic from the path of propriety, so that in this respect he may be responsible.

How woful has been the theory of some men, who, with a fanatical feeling, have possessed a gloomy temperament; — that all mankind were created, not after the image of God, but the image of the devil; that we are under the direction, not of a good and merciful being, but of Satan and of wicked spirits; that we are full of evil, and heirs of everlasting misery! If these opinions were held by all men in their full amount, why then, instead of building villages, and towns, and cities, we should have need only to build mad-houses!

Some persons seem to fancy that nothing is worth the attention of mankind but religious duties. The Almighty would not have created us, and placed us in the world with a capability of procuring a maintenance; he would not have put within our reach riches, honour, power, and many other blessings, which, in a moderate use, and with an upright purpose, may be made contributive to happiness; he would not have strewed around us the beauties of creation, the facilities for obtaining science, for making improvements in the arts, and a thousand other things, if religious service were the only object of our existence. It is true, that human beings are improved in their condition in the same proportion as they are raised in moral

goodness ; but virtue may be practised as effectually in our engagements with our fellow-creatures as in the actual worship of the Almighty. It is necessary, then, that we live in reference to this world and the next ; that we study to be good members of society and good Christians ; that we endeavour to ennoble and improve our nature ; and that we view ourselves as unworthy dependents on the bounty of the Most High. But the fanatic separates these duties : he thinks he honours God while he suffers the world and all its concerns to go into disorder through a culpable neglect ; and thus he disobeys the Divine commandments, and brings an odium on religion.

A man is allowed to enjoy himself with the blessings which Providence has scattered around him. He may behold and admire the heavens and the earth ; the volume of nature was never intended to be closed. The study of it is recommended by most of the inspired writers. If the pages of this magnificent volume lie open, shall men look upon them with indifference ? This surely would be highly honourable to him who made these things ! This would be attracting the Deity by repulsion, and recommending ourselves by despising his works ! Those persons act very foolishly who talk about the derangement of nature, about the "wilderness of this world," and other matters of a similar kind, — if by this they mean the natural globe ; for the truth is, that nothing but admiration should be excited by creation ; a pebble, a grain of sand, or a weed, is wonderful ; while it is the moral world, — the mind

and the actions of men, — which would merit opprobrious epithets. Let no one fancy that the Creator will be pleased by an arrogant criticism and depreciation of his works.

The Almighty designed us for moral, for intellectual, and for sensual pleasures, but for none of these distinct from the rest; those persons, therefore, who separate them pretend to be wiser than the Deity. How silly it is, then, for any one to pretend that nothing is worthy of our notice but the duties of religion. "We are beings," observes Wollaston, "who are made for many harmless enjoyments; beings that have many offices to perform one for another; and beings in whom, all things considered, it would be less respect to be constantly in the formal act of devotion, than to address ourselves to God, with prepared minds, at certain times, or upon certain occasions." And afterwards he observes, "to be always engaged in religious duties would appear as if the Deity needed it, or as if we merited something by it." It may, however, be enquired, what interest or inducement could the Almighty have possessed for the creation of man, if it were not for the purpose of receiving worship? This question would show the grovelling notions of the enquirer, and the prevailing selfishness of human nature. If the Supreme Being created us for his happiness, then he was not perfectly happy before; and as no addition could constitute perfection, he would not be perfectly happy now. If, however, he possesses perfect enjoyment, then the Almighty created us from a principle of disinterested benevolence. And he

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has not only done this with man, — to whom he has given a law, — but he has created an universe of life, of animation, and happiness, from which he receives no sort of worship, — namely, the brute creation. Besides this, the vegetable and mineral worlds evince consummate skill, and these are incapable even of feeling. The purpose, then, of the Supreme Being in creating man was not merely that of being worshipped. Those who think the Almighty a hard master are generally gloomy persons, who offer what they find to be a laborious service; those who view him as a God of benevolence offer him the incense of a grateful heart. Which is better and more consistent, — to attribute to the Supreme Governor low and despicable qualities, such as would disgrace an earthly sovereign, or high and ennobling attributes, as far exceeding human feelings as the stars of the heaven are higher than earth? And which is more acceptable, — a bold and familiar address, with impertinent epithets and expressions, or an humble application to the Supreme Being, with a sacred awe of the Divine greatness? The former is the method of the fanatic; the latter is that of the reasonable Christian.

Many erroneous opinions exist among fanatics with regard to the influence of the Divine Spirit. They fancy that every thought relating to religion, or almost every thought which comes into their mind, is the result of Divine influence; but the close and intimate union with Heaven, of which they speak, is frequently the result of their natural passions, and sometimes of a wicked heart. It is



degrading to the Supreme Being to be thus yoked in with worthless persons in perhaps a worthless cause. The terms which are sometimes used to designate the Almighty and the Saviour are degrading to these sacred personages. The word spouse, husband, lover, and many others, are frequently used in a low and improper manner. Females are to be suspected as having more of a natural than supernatural and religious feeling, when they form the image of a man in their imagination, and talk incoherently and ecstatically in the language of human love; for the transition from Divine to human, in this case, is very easy. The passion of love is fed most commonly by the fancy, and sometimes by a merely ideal form. And whether the persons be male or female, — when they talk about mystical marriage, divine intoxication, the ravishing delights of heavenly pleasure, celestial languishing, the super-mystical union of the Divine with the human soul, amorous elations, cessations, depressions, &c. (for these, and worse than these, have been adopted,) they may be deemed inspired; but the persons who say so are vastly mistaken, if they think that the inspiration proceeds from heaven.

There is nothing too absurd to have been connected with religion, and nothing too ridiculous to have been performed. Locke says, with respect to fanatical persons, — “ Their minds being prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies is an illumination from the Spirit of God; and whatsoever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that

impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed." There was a fatal instance of this sort of madness in the case of Thomas Schucker of St. Gall. This man declared, in a public congregation, that he was inspired by the Spirit of God; and after he had talked wildly for some time, he commanded his brother to kneel down before him, and his brother, being a fanatic, did as he was bid. While all the spectators were waiting in suspense at what might happen, the fanatic drew his sword; and in answer to the enquiry of several persons, he said, — "Be still, I will do nothing but what shall be revealed by my heavenly Father;" and then he cut off his brother's head! Sometimes the greatest weakness and ignorance are attributed to the all-wise Governor of the world. During the protectorship of Cromwell, it happened that a secret expedition being about to sail, one of the fanatical preachers, whom Cromwell was obliged to please sometimes, although he generally disapproved of their conduct, came to the Protector and demanded an audience. When this was granted, he said, — "The Lord wishes to know where the secret expedition is going." — "The Lord knows already," replied Cromwell; "but thou shalt know, for thou shalt go with it;" and he sent him on board the fleet. Another instance, of a somewhat similar kind, occurred with some fanatics and Chief Justice Holt. His Lordship having committed some leaders of a disorderly sect to gaol (whether judiciously or not is another question), one of the members called at his Lordship's residence and demanded an interview; which

being granted, he said, — “I am come with a message from the Lord, requiring thee, on pain of everlasting fire, to grant a *noli prosequi* to God’s faithful servants, whom thou hast cast into prison.” — “Thou art a lying prophet,” replied his Lordship; “for if the Lord had sent thee, he would have directed thee to the Attorney-General, for he knows that it is not in my power to grant it.” And then he sent the messenger among his companions. Nothing can be much more absurd, than to attribute impulses to the Supreme Being which are founded in error; and yet the majority of these fancied inspirations exhibit this inconsistency. The truth is, that an unbridled imagination, with a derangement of the nervous system, will carry a man into the most extravagant conduct. Such persons should be pitied, but their conduct should be exposed, that others may take warning. The early Christians afforded no precedent for such absurdities. “We may defy the enemies of Christianity” (observes Mr. Brown, in his *Remarks on the Characteristics of Lord Shaftesbury*) “to produce any instance, either of speech or practice, that had the smallest tincture of extravagance. Their conduct was regular and exemplary; their words were the words of truth and soberness.”

But although the immediate followers of Christ were sober and temperate, there were many heretical sects which sprang up in the second and the following centuries, which ran into great extravagancies. People of this kind have cumbered the ground to the present day. Many a man, like Cardan, has pretended to dreams, trances, and

ecstasies,—the capability of unraveling the past, and predicting the future. Borri, a Milanese, was just of this character: he declared that, having fallen into a trance, he had beheld wondrous things, he had heard the voices of angelic beings, which predicted that he would become a great prophet. He said that St. Michael had taken possession of his heart, and had established his residence there; that bands of heavenly beings communicated to him all the secrets of heaven. The truth of these prophecies must be judged by the subsequent events. He interfered with the government of his country, and died at the stake before any of his anticipations had been realised. Another instance of zeal without knowledge existed in the case of Hoffman of Strasburg. This man left his usual engagements for the purpose of preaching the Gospel; and while he was thus engaged, an old man prophesied that Hoffman should return to Strasburg, where he would be imprisoned for six months, and that he would then come forth and preach the Gospel to all the world, attended by a train of prophets and the 144,000 which are mentioned in the Revelation! The poor enthusiast returned, and having done something amiss, he was imprisoned; when sentence was pronounced on him, he shook off the dust from his feet, and anathematised his judges; but Hoffman died in prison, and thus the hopes of himself and his party were disappointed. Comenius predicted that the thousand years of prophecy would commence in 1672; for his own comfort he died before that period arrived. There has been a great deal of

and the actions of men, — which would merit opprobrious epithets. Let no one fancy that the Creator will be pleased by an arrogant criticism and depreciation of his works.

The Almighty designed us for moral, for intellectual, and for sensual pleasures, but for none of these distinct from the rest; those persons, therefore, who separate them pretend to be wiser than the Deity. How silly it is, then, for any one to pretend that nothing is worthy of our notice but the duties of religion. "We are beings," observes Wollaston, "who are made for many harmless enjoyments; beings that have many offices to perform one for another; and beings in whom, all things considered, it would be less respect to be constantly in the formal act of devotion, than to address ourselves to God, with prepared minds, at certain times, or upon certain occasions." And afterwards he observes, "to be always engaged in religious duties would appear as if the Deity needed it, or as if we merited something by it." It may, however, be enquired, what interest or inducement could the Almighty have possessed for the creation of man, if it were not for the purpose of receiving worship? This question would show the grovelling notions of the enquirer, and the prevailing selfishness of human nature. If the Supreme Being created us for his happiness, then he was not perfectly happy before; and as no addition could constitute perfection, he would not be perfectly happy now. If, however, he possesses perfect enjoyment, then the Almighty created us from a principle of disinterested benevolence. And he

goodness ; but virtue may be practised as effectually in our engagements with our fellow-creatures as in the actual worship of the Almighty. It is necessary, then, that we live in reference to this world and the next ; that we study to be good members of society and good Christians ; that we endeavour to ennoble and improve our nature ; and that we view ourselves as unworthy dependents on the bounty of the Most High. But the fanatic separates these duties : he thinks he honours God while he suffers the world and all its concerns to go into disorder through a culpable neglect ; and thus he disobeys the Divine commandments, and brings an odium on religion.

A man is allowed to enjoy himself with the blessings which Providence has scattered around him. He may behold and admire the heavens and the earth ; the volume of nature was never intended to be closed. The study of it is recommended by most of the inspired writers. If the pages of this magnificent volume lie open, shall men look upon them with indifference ? This surely would be highly honourable to him who made these things ! This would be attracting the Deity by repulsion, and recommending ourselves by despising his works ! Those persons act very foolishly who talk about the derangement of nature, about the "wilderness of this world," and other matters of a similar kind, — if by this they mean the natural globe ; for the truth is, that nothing but admiration should be excited by creation ; a pebble, a grain of sand, or a weed, is wonderful ; while it is the moral world, — the mind

and the actions of men, — which would merit opprobrious epithets. Let no one fancy that the Creator will be pleased by an arrogant criticism and depreciation of his works.

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public worship. If a little noise be allowable, why may there not be a little more? It is true that the early Christians repeated "Amen" audibly in their public worship; but this practice did not affect decorum; there was no attempt to disorder the feelings of the people; it arose most probably from the custom among the Heathen and the Jews of joining audibly in the public service. In the Church of England it is not objectionable in the present day, for it is agreeable with a long-established custom; and it is not connected with an insidious object — that of working on the passions of the auditory.

But if from noises religious persons may go to movements, — a swinging of the body, or a movement of the hands and feet, — there is no reason why dancing may not be allowed. In this enlightened age, this period of civilisation, it is usual, on some occasions, among Christian worshippers, for persons to jump and throw themselves into the most ludicrous attitudes, to fall exhausted, and then to rise and go on with the same gymnastic exhibition! Some of the Heathen worshippers did the same, and they have been supposed to have been under the influence of devils. Under whose influence are the disorderly people of our day? Many persons in Christian assemblies talk incoherently, rant, scream, groan, and make a noise like the roar of a hundred bedlamites. Intemperate zeal is a species of drunkenness: what is produced by ardent spirits affects the body, and then the mind; what is produced by fanaticism affects the mind, and then the body. It is discreditable to

many who know better, that they encourage, directly or indirectly, extravagance in religious worship. If they be influenced by a fear of checking religious feeling, their motive may be good; but if it be occasioned by a fear of displeasing and incurring the censure of hot-headed persons, it must be despicable. It is with fanaticism as Lord Bacon has observed of superstition, in all reasonable and scientific matters the sensible lead the vulgar; but in superstition fools lead the wise.

Many among the most notorious heretics were deceived, but many were deceivers; and strange as it may appear, the character soon becomes reversed. He that begins with practising on the credulity of others (if he be successful) will soon become credulous himself. Mahomed is an instance of this sort; and an eminent writer has remarked, that a repetition of the most improbable theory will at last produce a belief in that theory. If a man be a fanatic, be careful of him! There is undoubtedly a screw loose somewhere — in his mental faculties, in his moral conduct, or his worldly affairs; for the same reason which will not allow him to act consistently in religion will prevent him from acting rationally in other engagements. A fanatic is seldom a good member of society.

But the cry of the enthusiast is, when he endeavours to excite the passions of men, — “If one soul be saved, it will pay for all the trouble.” This is very plausible; but it would serve as an excuse for every thing which might affect the feelings of the people, and disarrange the moral and political government of the world. Upon this principle

the fears of weak persons may be excited; their hopes may be highly elated; they may be introduced into mysticism, as the Heathen were into mysteries; they may sing, rant, halloo, and dance; they may anathematise all who will not join them; and the answer may be given, — “If one soul only be saved, it will pay for all the trouble!” Men who have been so mistakingly influenced in the matter of saving souls have said this, and done all that I have mentioned. There is scarcely any thing which could be thought of, but what has been maintained or performed in some period of the world.

One instance may be quoted, as a convincing proof that religious enthusiasm, or an inclination to go beyond the boundary of good order, is exceedingly injurious to the cause of virtue and piety. Many cases might be cited from the history of heretics, but one may be sufficient. Priscillian, Bishop of Avila, in the fourth century, a man of great abilities, but unfortunately inclined to fanaticism, began to preach the Gospel in a devout and consistent manner. He soon perceived that his labours were useful, that a little zeal was advantageous; and he fancied that a much greater degree would be proportionably beneficial: — for he thought, “if there are souls to be saved, the more I can save the better; and the more I can affect the minds of the people, the more successful I shall be.” This induced him to adopt innovations; to practise novel modes of worship; and as one novelty was found to be advantageous — to excite attention, to draw a larger auditory — he

adopted others. He had now slipt his cable, and he was in danger of being drifted among shoals and quicksands. At this period he was raised to the mitre by the influence of his followers. The religious worship had been confined to seasonable hours ; but the light of fanaticism loves to glimmer in darkness ; the meetings, therefore, were sometimes continued till midnight. But who could object ? Were there not souls to be saved ? Was it not, now or never ? Might not a delay until the following morning occasion the everlasting loss of many ? — This is the reasoning of those persons who fancy that this world is a wilderness, and that every thing moral and natural goes by chance. The Priscillianists had been at first comparatively decorous ; but they soon became disorderly and profane. From a decent behaviour they became enthusiastic, and destitute of shame in many things which were opposed to virtue and good order. All feelings, it was said, should be roused to ecstasy ; there was an intimate union between God and the soul ; the inclinations of the flesh were not to be subdued, for these affected not the heavenly principle ; indeed, when the passions were powerful, they might be gratified. With these and other licentious principles, they maintained that wives might leave their husbands when they were tired of them, and husbands their wives — for all were equal in Christ. He that was made free (they maintained), in a spiritual sense, was superior to the law. Thus they became a most shameless crew of fanatics ; they were disorderly and immoral ; they were a disgrace to religion, and a dishonour to

human nature. It was observed by the celebrated Maimbourg, that "although the Priscillianists began in the spirit, they ended in the flesh." They began with saving souls, and, it is to be feared, ended with losing them. Fanaticism is like a rock which rolls from the summit of a mountain — it not only falls lower and lower, but acquires an increased impetuosity with its progress.

It has been sometimes maintained, that benefit arises, on some occasions, from an unusual degree of religious enthusiasm. It will certainly be produced by a calm and serious investigation of Divine truths; but the moment it passes into disorder, it ceases to be permanently advantageous. But if it were admitted, that some advantage had arisen from religious uproar; (and many there are who will maintain that the amount has not been small; for in all cases where the judgment is perverted, and the passions are excited, men will contend for what a person in his sober senses would reject;) yet the practice is not sanctioned by Jesus Christ, nor the precepts of the Gospel: and this is enough for any reasonable man; we must act consistently, and leave the result to the Almighty. The great Teacher of mankind came to seek and to save sinners; that is, to turn them from idolatry to the worship of the true God; from ignorance of the Almighty to a knowledge, esteem, and obedience of his sacred laws. There certainly was, in all his actions, a commanding dignity, and in all his precepts a love for the human race; but where do we discover fanaticism or rant? Where do we find an account of uproar, or powerful sympathetic feelings, which were excited by him in the minds of

his auditory? Shall it be fancied, that the mission of Christ was merely an experiment to discover the dispositions of men? and has it happened that, on returning to his Father's mansion, he has thought proper to adopt some other measures for the conversion of mankind? Or will it be imagined, that Jesus Christ employed one method, and the superior lights of later ages have exhibited a better method? Let us not suppose that the Creator was ignorant of what he had formed; that the Redeemer knew not what was in man. Let us not fancy that men can discover a more effectual method for producing genuine reformation in morals and religion than Christ himself adopted. Those who act differently from the pattern which he has exhibited insult him who left his life as an example, that we might walk in his steps.

It has not been denied, that some good may have arisen from fanaticism; but it is not a new occurrence for good to be brought out of evil: it is not, however, an argument for the allowance of that evil. Nor will it follow, that because the excess of zeal occasions disadvantage, no zeal or interest must be felt for religion. One baneful effect of extravagance is to connect disgrace with true piety, and to lead men into carelessness or contempt of their duty. It is like a whirlpool in the midst of a channel, which occasions a great stir in that particular part of the waters, but hinders the progress of the main current. The happy art of sailing on the great ocean of life is so to avoid Scylla as not to be lost in Charybdis; so to avoid fanaticism as not to become indifferent; and so to avoid carelessness as not to become fanatical.

CHAP. VI.

ON SUPERNATURAL INFLUENCE AND APPEARANCE.

THE term supernatural appearance applies to every visible object which does not arise agreeably with the laws of nature. Many things are deemed supernatural which are not so. An eclipse, a meteor, the aurora borealis producing the forms of swords or men, have been deemed supernatural; but this term is usually applied to spiritual existences, which take the semblance of material beings. These may be heavenly spirits in the likeness of men, or they may be the souls of departed persons; they may be good spirits or bad ones; their purpose may be beneficent or otherwise. I shall endeavour to show, that a belief in the existence of supernatural beings has been almost universal. This belief has been founded on natural deductions from acknowledged facts. For, as it has been believed, that there are spiritual beings superior to man, it has been inferred that they may sometimes hold intercourse with man: as the soul was believed to be separated from the body at death, it was thought not unlikely that it might occasionally visit this earth: and as a superior being could not be known except by a visible representation, so it was fancied that a spirit might take somewhat of

the form of humanity traced out in lines of light ; and the ghost of a mortal man might resume his original appearance. The question of supernatural appearances is an interesting one, for herewith are connected many important consequences.

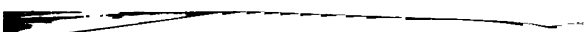
The Egyptians believed that the souls of dead men came back from the grave, and clad themselves in the forms which they had been accustomed to wear ; that they frequented the temples and the dwellings of mortal men ; that they were sometimes seen on the mountains and sometimes in the clouds ; sometimes on the hills, in the valleys, by the sea-side, and on the ocean. They believed, also, that there were genii of rivers. When Bruce was in Egypt, a priest informed him that he had seen the genius of the Nile ; that he was an aged man, with a long silvery beard, and he leant on a staff. The Greeks believed that every man possessed three souls. The first they termed manes ; this, they supposed, went into Tartarus or Elysium : the second, spiritus, which they believed ascended into the skies : the third, umbra, which hovered about the tomb, and sometimes appeared to men. Dido threatened Æneas that she would torment him with her umbra.

“ Sequar atris ignibus absens ;
Et, quum frigida mors animâ seduxerit artus,
O mnibus umbra locis adero.”

VIRGIL, book iv.

The Greeks believed also in the existence of Nereids, Dryads, Uraniæ, and other beings, which were sometimes visible to human sight. The

Roman writers — whether poets, moralists, or historians — allow the universality of the belief in supernatural appearances. The Arabians, and some other Oriental nations, maintained that the souls of dead men sometimes appeared; and they believed in the existence of spiritual beings, who had been unconnected with matter, and who sometimes frequented the earth, and sometimes the heavens; these they termed *Peri* and *Dives*: the former were beautiful and beneficent, their only object was to impart favours to human beings; the latter were ugly and malevolent, they stirred up discord and war, they brought on the people plague, famine, and death. In Palestine a belief in spectres was very prevalent. In the Apocrypha we are told that Heliodorus with his guard had surrounded the temple at Jerusalem, for the purpose of plundering and carrying off the treasures; and behold “a mighty apparition appeared,” a rider clothed in armour of gold, and he rode a fierce and stately horse; and the horse smote Heliodorus, and struck him to the earth, and all the guards fainted. When one of the Maccabees was engaged with Timotheus, behold there were five horsemen in the heavens; they were covered with armour of burnished silver, and the bridles of the horses were gold; and they descended and came about Maccabeus, and preserved him from the fury of his enemies: but they shot arrows of fire and lightning among his foes. After Christ had risen from the dead, he said, in answer to some enquiries, — “Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” This was as much



as to say, — Spirits appear, but I am not a spirit, for a spirit is unsubstantial. When Peter, after his liberation from prison, went to the house which he had been accustomed to frequent, the servant told the inmates that Peter was standing at the gate, but they said, — “It is his angel.” When Christ walked on the sea, the disciples said, — “It is a spirit.” A similar belief has existed in all parts of Europe — even among the Icelanders, the Scandinavians, and the Greenlanders: we all know it has existed in Ireland, in Scotland, and in England. Ossian says, in agreement with the belief in northern climes, — “Ghosts fly on clouds, and ride on winds; they rest together in their caves, and talk of mortal men.” And Blair says, in reference to the prevailing feeling in this country, —

“ Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs;
Dead men have come again, and walk’d about;
And the great bell has toll’d, unring, untouch’d.”

This belief, then, has not been confined to the sable inhabitants of tropical regions, or the swarthy residents of the poles; to the learned or the illiterate; to the civilised or the savage; but, in every country, and in every age, a belief in supernatural appearances has existed; and “those who have denied it by their language have confessed it with their fears.”

What, then, is the inference with regard to this subject? Surely that some degree of probability must be connected with it; for how can we imagine that an opinion so prevalent should have been

founded solely on fiction? The belief in the existence of a God has been almost universal; and this, it has been thought, is a powerful argument in favour of that opinion. The belief in the immortality of the soul has been also general; and this has been deemed by good divines a powerful argument in its favour. The inference, then, with respect to supernatural appearances must be, that the testimony of all mankind must make the opinion exceedingly probable.

But I shall go from probability to certainty. When the Israelites were on their way from Egypt to the land of Canaan, while they were dwelling in tents in the wilderness, they were commanded not to practise those arts which would raise the spirits of departed men. This command implies, that human souls might be raised. When Nebuchadnezzar had condemned the three Israelites to a fiery furnace, he exclaimed, — “Lo! I see four men;” and “the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Now, the phrase, Son of God, in this case, means a worthy or illustrious personage. The worshippers of the Almighty in the early history of the world are called sons of God. “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took wives,” &c. The daughters of men were daughters of idolaters. And St. Paul says, — “Now, beloved, are ye sons of God,” &c.; that is, worthy persons, or adopted as sons. If this had been the Saviour that Nebuchadnezzar saw, it would have been no argument in favour of this belief; for what he might do, would be no rule for inferior beings: but it was, most probably, a

heavenly being in the form of man. Samuel came from the other world and appeared. Saul requested the witch of En-dor to raise Samuel, that he might know from him something about his future destiny; for, as he lamentably confessed, God had departed from him, and had ceased to answer him "by prophets or by dreams." When Samuel was rising, Saul said, "What seest thou?" and the woman replied, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle." Then Saul looked, and he knew that it was Samuel. There are two reasons why this history may be deemed genuine. The Scriptures plainly state that Samuel was raised; and the predictions which Samuel made were exactly accomplished. It has been said sometimes, that the woman did not expect Samuel, and therefore she was astonished; but the reason for her surprise may be easily discovered: Saul had issued an edict against all who practised magic arts; as soon as Samuel was raised, the woman knew it was Saul who was present, and she feared that she should be put to death.

Since the Christian era there have been many credible accounts of supernatural appearances. An angel burst open the doors of the prison in which Peter was confined, and liberated him. The word angel signifies office or agency; it is applicable to a man or a heavenly spirit. St. Paul advises women to be covered in the church, "because of the angels:" these were the elders of the churches, who, perhaps, had issued a recommendation to that effect. And St. John addressed his Apoca-

lypse to the angels or elders of various churches. It is said that an angel appeared to Balaam: the word used is מַלְאָכִי, and this is the same with the ἄγγελος of the Septuagint and the New Testament: this signifies office merely; and therefore the messenger might have been a human being. On the other hand, a spirit unconnected with office is termed רוּחַ, as in Job, iv. 15., and answers to the Greek Πνεῦμα. But it is evident in the case of Peter, that the angel was a spirit, for he performed what man could not accomplish. He was visible, for the guards saw him; and Peter not only saw him, but conversed with him. The ghosts of Moses and Elias appeared on Mount Tabor. Angels, heavenly beings, were seen at the tomb of Christ immediately after the resurrection. Thus there are six incontrovertible cases, founded on the authority either of the Old or the New Testament, in which the doctrine of supernatural appearance is shown to be correct. In addition to these, others might be mentioned; but these are sufficient.

It will be admitted, that a vast deal of fiction has been generated by the fanciful and the timid. This has arisen partly from education. The nurse, as soon as the infant becomes capable of understanding the meaning of words, talks to it of spectres, black men, and hobgoblins. Children, when they become capable of so doing, gather around the winter's fire, and pass the evening in relating a hundred stories of things that never happened; and then, as each new tale begins, of "horrid apparition, tall and ghastly," the timid

listeners draw a little closer to each other, and fear to look behind them. Owing to early impressions, a church or a churchyard is deemed an awful place at night. There are not many persons who would be inclined to spend the silent hours of darkness within a church —

“ Where light-heel’d ghosts, and visionary shades,”

glide up and down the silent aisles. And if a person consented to do so, although he might screw up his courage pretty high at first, yet it would soon become slackened: the first sound would occasion a little fear, the second would excite more; and then he would fancy sounds which did not exist, and his flesh would creep with terror; the glimmering moon might throw a few rays through the storied windows, and illumine some distant object, and cause it to resemble an unearthly being, dressed up in the garments of mortality; a thousand frightful forms would dance before him; he would hear voices and hollow moans; and then he would rush out of the place, or fall senseless on the pavement. Feelings of a similar kind are connected with a churchyard; the schoolboy passing through it timidly, is naturally described by Blair; and the same poet says, —

—— “ Roused from their slumbers,
In grim array the grisly spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and obstinately sullen
Pass and repass, hush’d as the foot of night.
Again the screech-owl shrieks; ungracious sound!
I’ll hear no more; it makes one’s blood run chill.”

The spot on which a murder has been committed has been deemed an awful place : —

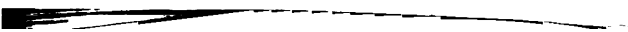
“ At twilight grey, the peasants shun
The place accurst, where deeds of blood were done.”

In any dark and lonely place the feelings will be excited. If, for instance, a person be bewildered in some solitary dell, and the shadows of night be gathering around him, and the hoarse rivulet murmurs, and the dark branches of the trees hang over him, and at a distance is seen nothing but gloom and obscurity ; — then every sound would be deemed the step of a spectre, and every movement the approach of some inhabitant of another world ; a thousand forms would distract his vision —

“ Of calling shapes, and beck’ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable men’s names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.”

Or, if the veil which covered the heavens were parted ; if the vaporous curtain were drawn aside, and the waning moon faintly gilded the edges of the clouds, and its influence sparkled among the trees ; — then every shadow would seem like an immaterial being clad in the form of mortal man ; and every illuminated spot would be converted into fairy rings, on which were dancing groups of little beings.

Mistiness, when it is accompanied by the shadows of the evening, will sometimes convert the stump of a tree, a post, or a horse, into a super-human being. Butler says, —



“ Some have mistaken blocks and posts
For spectres, apparitions, ghosts,
With saucer eyes, and horns, and some
Have heard the devil beat a drum.”

An uneasy conscience will conjure up a thousand monsters. Solomon, in the Book of Wisdom, says of the Egyptians, that over them was spread a heavy night, and though no reality appeared to alarm them, they were filled with fear, refusing to look upon the air which surrounded them, believing it to be filled with horrid apparitions. Every thing frightened them; “ whether it were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a pleasing fall of waters running violently, or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could be seen of skipping beasts, or a roaring of the most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains; these things made them to swoon with fear.”

In solitude, when the mind is not particularly engaged, the passions generally become stronger than the judgment; so that a man cannot possibly say, at any particular time, what he may feel or do on another occasion. In order to check this, some diversion is usually practised, such as whistling or singing, playing with the fingers, or beating a tune with the feet; whatever will divert the mind, will lessen the influence of fear. Indeed, the ticking of a clock or watch, a cheerful fire, the company of a horse or dog, will go a long way in counter-acting solitude, and maintaining courage.

Sleep is frequently a cause of deception; and

when a person lies in bed before he sleeps, his fancy sometimes conjures up a great many spectral forms; but if he sleep, and during his sleep he have a full and clear remembrance of the appearance of the room, so that the furniture may be exactly the same as it was before he slept, and as it will be when he awakes, and during his dream he had a powerful impression of a spectre by his bed-side, then he may be so much frightened that he may awake, and the transition from sleep to wakefulness may not be perceived; and when he looks and sees no ghost, he thinks the ghost has vanished. We judge of a change from sleep to wakefulness by the dissimilarity which we discover between the imagery in the one case, and that in the other. When our dream represented something which is different from what we behold on awaking, we know it was a dream; but when it represented exactly the same as we behold afterwards, we think we have not slept; and in this way many a ghost-story has been formed.

Ghosts have been supposed to make dreadful noises.

“ O’er yon long resounding plain
Slowly moves the solemn train,
Wailing wild with shrieks of woe
O’er the bones that rest below ! ”

OGILVIE.

Pausanias relates, that on the plains of Marathon, there were heard cries of terror and woe from the umbra of slaughtered warriors. Ossian compares the groan of a multitude to the “thunder of

night, when the cloud bursts on Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on the hollow wind." There have been some exceedingly fine descriptions of ghosts; that of Job is the most prominent. In the night, "when deep sleep falleth on man, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice," &c. Ossian says, — "I saw the ghost of night; silent he stood; his robe of mist flew on the wind. I could behold his tears; an aged man he seemed, and full of thought." In another place he says, — "The ghost of Crugal came from the cave of his hill. The stars dim-twinkled through his form; and his voice was like the sound of a distant stream."

There is no reason, however, that ghosts should shriek; that they should frequent churches, churchyards, or places where murders have been committed, or battles fought; there is no reason why they should appear in the night rather than in the day; for the fact is, spirits can move rapidly, and they can find no attraction in the dead body, which would induce them to frequent the grave. And if spirits appear for any purpose, they can accomplish what they have to do in the day as well as in the night. Most of the credible spectral appearances have been seen in broad daylight.

A great deal of error, then, it must be acknowledged, has been connected with the system of spectral appearances; but what is the inference?

— That, because there is fiction, there is nothing but fiction? By no means. For the belief in a God, to which I have alluded, has been mixed up with all kinds of error (and to this I have referred in the Chapter on Superstition): the belief in a future state has been connected with similar errors; — some have supposed that departed souls are shut up in deep recesses, among delightful valleys; others, that heaven is fixed upon the highest mountains; and others, that it lies beyond the ocean; — but it is not thought that the belief in a God, and the belief in immortality, are much affected thereby.

The system of supernatural appearances is not only supported by probability, but by certainty. This is a matter of the highest importance; for if heavenly spirits appear to man, then, of course, all doubt with regard to the existence of such beings must cease: and as we find that material worlds are numerous, and the inhabitants of these worlds are innumerable; so we may conclude that there are spiritual regions of vast extent, and multitudes of spirits which no man could number. Some of these, as I have observed, may be angels — ministers of the Most High, who bask in perpetual bliss; who find their greatest happiness in diffusing benefits among inferior creatures, —

“ And pleased the Almighty’s orders to perform,
Ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm.”

These messengers are frequently mentioned by the sacred writers; and another sort, who have been employed in executing the judgments of the Al-

mighty, are also noticed. Origen supposed there were legions of demons that inhabited the air — some of anger, others of pride and avarice. From a supposition of this sort the ancients attributed all important events, to good or evil gods or angels. Thus, there were angels of war and angels of peace, angels of uproar and angels of quietness, angels of armies and angels of government, angels of love and angels of hatred, angels of mystery, of knowledge, of eloquence, of friendship, of solitude, of day, of night, of life, and death. Milton says, —

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep :
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night. How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive to each other's note,
Singing their great Creator ? Oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
Divides the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.”

Good angels are, without doubt, employed by the Almighty to execute his will; and evil angels may be sometimes allowed to act; but in every case they are under the immediate controul of the Great Governor, so that none can do what he will.

If the spirits of departed persons have appeared, then man is immortal; he lives after his body is mouldered into dust: if he lives he must be happy or unhappy, as his fate will depend on the present life, and his rule is the law of the Almighty; we

may see the necessity and benefit of a revelation. The resurrection of Christ was the hinge on which the truth of Christianity turned; the appearance of spiritual beings in various ages is a foundation on which the truth of Christianity may be fixed. Our expectation of a passage into another world is greatly increased by the reflection, that spiritual beings have come into this world, and that they have been visible to man.

But the rule with regard to supernatural appearances, is this — the Almighty does not act uselessly; a pure spirit, therefore, or the soul of a departed man, would never be suffered to come, except on some very important occasion; and he would never come to perform what might have been accomplished by ordinary means. Hence, ninety-nine out of a hundred of all the ghost-stories will fall to the ground as mere fictions, suggested by the follies and the fears of mankind. We possess a powerful rule of guidance in the Scriptures; we need not those immediate communications, visions, spectral appearances, &c., which were required in the Patriarchal and in the Jewish systems, and in the early ages of Christianity, before the Scriptures were diffused, and before life and immortality were completely brought to light. But we are not informed that spiritual communications and spectral appearances have ceased; consequently they may still occur; they are possible, but not probable: a person might behold such an appearance, but no one has a right to expect it. The foolish notions which have prevailed of supernatural noises, of haunted houses, of ghosts in

churches and churchyards, of speechless ghosts, and ghosts who pursue the midnight traveller; of dogs, bears, and hideous monsters from another world; with a hundred other foolish fancies; are all unfounded in truth, and unsanctioned by Christianity.

CHAP. VII.

THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF HUMAN LIFE.

HUMAN life is exceedingly short. Man is born, he looks around him, and he dies. He is like the meteor, which attracts a temporary notice, and his greatest glory is only to illumine the earth for a moment and then vanish. He has been compared to a cloud, to a shadow; and Pindar calls him the dream of a shadow. He has been compared to a dream; and Shakspeare says, — “Our little life is rounded by a sleep.” Homer calls him a leaf, and St. James a vapour.

“This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
The twilight of our day, the vestibule.”

Diodorus Siculus observes of the Egyptians, — “They deem the residence of man so short on the earth, that they give the habitation of the living the name of inns, but the tombs of the dead everlasting abodes.” But this apparent brevity arises from a contrast of time with eternity. A thousand, or ten thousand years, would not nearer resemble endless duration. If the life of man were lengthened a hundred times, and all other existences were made of an equal duration, we should not consider life as very long, especially if we considered the present state in reference to the future. If,

however, we contrast moments with hours, and hours with months, and months with years, or a single year with threescore years and ten, we may perceive that the life of man occupies a considerable period. We seem to have begun with eternity, for we remember not our beginning.

How variable is human life! Jeremy Taylor beautifully illustrates its rising and setting, its joys and sorrows, by the revolution of the sun. "When this heavenly body," he observes, "approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the larks to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, — thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brow of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, — under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly: so is a man's reason and his life." Every thing in this world is transitory, —

— "Seasons have changed,
Ages and empires roll'd like smoke away."

Colchis, in the time of the Romans, was a rich and powerful province, full of towns and cities, to which all the nations of the earth carried their manufactures; but now it is a vast forest. Where are Carthage, Babylon, and Nineveh? Where is

the glory of Sparta, of Athens, and of Rome? Where are the monuments of art which were raised by the early inhabitants of the globe? Time is the destroyer of all things. Shakspeare says that its glory is —

“ To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books, and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient raven’s wings,
To dry the old oak’s sap, and cherish springs,
To spoil antiquities of hammer’d steel,
And turn the giddy round of Fortune’s wheel.”

The inscriptions on the pyramids of Egypt are effaced; and no one knows for whom these structures were raised. The principal part of the wonders of the world are crumbling into dust, and we look around and see new wonders springing up.

The inhabitants of the earth are very numerous; these must be frequently changed; and although there is much happiness in the world, yet there is a vast deal of misery. How much sickness and death must be necessary for the removal of eight hundred millions of persons! But we may include the two hundred generations which have gone before, and which, probably, contained one hundred and fifty thousand millions of human beings. There is scarcely a day in which thousands are not born, and scarcely a minute which listens not to the groan of some departing spirit.

There is, most probably, life in other worlds, where sin and death have never entered. What an inexhaustible subject for contemplation!

Planets innumerable covered with living creatures; suns lighting systems which are far beyond the reach of human vision! These not only declare the majesty and power of the Almighty, but the multitudes which dwell thereon praise the name of their Great Creator!

However, we are situated among the emblems of sorrow and mortality. Every thing tells us we are travelling to another home. Life has been described as —

— “ The flourishing array
Of the proud summer-meadow, which to-day
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay.”
QUARLES.

A Persian writer has said, — “ As a drop of water moves tremulously on the lotus leaf, so is human life inexpressibly slippery.” —

“ The spider’s most attenuated thread
Is cord or cable to man’s tender tie
On earthly bliss, it breaks at every breeze.”
YOUNG.

The tendency to increase is so great among mankind, that a generation had need to hold but a short tenure. If wars, famine, and pestilence, were not to visit us, the population would be doubled in twenty years; consequently the globe would soon be overstocked. In some countries, the inhabitants multiply and are starved; this is the case in China. Population is thinned by the brutal practice of infanticide. In the East, thousands of infants are thrown into rivers; and in many parts of the globe, the aged are given to wild beasts.

Pestilence sweeps its scythe over the nations, and cuts off thousands of persons. In the third century there was a pestilence which raged in Rome for five successive years; and, at one time, carried off a thousand in a day. How dreadfully has Egypt, Turkey, India, China, and some parts of Africa, been visited by this destructive agent! War has also slain its tens of thousands. The havoc which the Emperor Claudius made among the Northern invaders is said to have been almost incredible. In a battle which was fought between Caius Marius and the Teutones, there were, according to the Roman writers, two hundred thousand of the latter destroyed. The same general attacked the Cimbri, and gave them so great a defeat, that one hundred and fifty thousand were left dead on the field of battle. What havoc was made at Jerusalem, and what havoc has been made in almost every part of the globe, by war! The immense army of Xerxes was destroyed in three years. The magnificent army of Napoleon, which amounted to almost one million of persons, perished in Russia, with the exception of forty or fifty thousand. Massacres have carried off multitudes of human beings. During the reign of Boadicea, seventy thousand Romans were massacred in this country. In the time of Gessius Florus, twenty thousand Jews were murdered in Cesarea in one day; and fifty thousand were afterwards murdered in Alexandria. Then what a massacre was made in France, by the Papists, of the Protestants!

Death lays his heavy hands on infants, and partly through mismanagement,—too much or too

little clothing, insalubrious air, and improper food. In populous cities, one half of the inhabitants die under four years of age; in towns and villages the proportion rises higher, and life is longer. Death carries away one in twenty annually in crowded places; but the mortality is lessened to one in twenty-eight in the country. In some parts of the globe, the duration of human life is comparatively long; in others, it is very short. In tropical climates manhood is premature, — the inhabitants are married at ten or twelve, and seldom live to fifty; the negroes become wrinkled and apparently aged at forty. The life of man is as a day, and every day is as a little life, in which, as Sir William Wotton observes, “we may reckon our birth from the womb of the morning (when we are like the sun in his strength); after which, like a shadow that declineth, we hasten to the evening of our age; till at last we close our eyes in sleep, the image of death; and our whole life is but the tale of a day told over and over.”

“ Since as a ship amidst the deepes,
Or as an eagle through the ayre,
Of which no way th’ impression keepes,
Most swift when seeming least to move;
This breath of which we take such care,
Doth tosse the body every where,
That it may hence with haste remove.”

EARL OF STIRLING.

How sublime and appropriate is that exclamation of Job, — “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a

shadow and continueth not !” Jeremy Taylor has beautifully described the transition from life and activity, from bloom and beauty, to sickness and decline :— “ So have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood ; and, at first, it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb’s fleece ; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age ; it bowed the head, and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces.” And thus, the inhabitants of the earth pass away to the retirement of the grave, “ where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.” Although there is much happiness in the world, yet there is much misery. Young has given a catalogue of some of the woes that “ flesh is heir to.”

“ War, famine, pest, volcano, storm, and fire,
Intestine broils, oppression with her heart
Wrapt up in triple brass, besiege mankind.
God’s image, disinherited of day,
Here plunged in mines, forgets a sun was made ;
There beings, deathless as their haughty lord,
Are hammer’d to the galling oar for life ;
And plough the winter’s wave, and reap despair.
Some, for hard masters, broken under arms,
In battle lopt away, with half their limbs,
Beg bitter bread through realms their valour saved.”

The eminent Boetius was a Roman by birth, and of high family ; he received all the honours which

were due to his rank and learning; and at last was beaten to death with clubs for some pretended political conspiracy. Louis IX. was a prince of great abilities, great success, and great honour; but at the siege of Tunis he was seized by the plague, he was laid on ashes, and died. Hollar, a celebrated engraver, died in poverty. When he was about to depart, the bailiff came to take away his bed. "Ah!" said he, "wait a little while, till I find another in the grave." Molière composed a play, and performed a part of it with much applause; he feigned a dead man in one of the acts, and he died in reality the same evening. "The deep, cold shadow of the tomb," is thrown across our path, and every thing reminds us of our mortality. Philip of Macedon had scarcely needed to have been told that he was mortal, if he had taken the trouble to think. But splendour blinds the eyes, poverty and distress open them, and loudly proclaim, that a state of unhappiness is not intended, by the beneficent Creator, to continue long. Death will soon open the doors of the prison-house, and give liberty to the captive; it will break the chains of poverty, and provide an asylum for the destitute; the lord and the vassal, the honourable and the low, the oppressor and the oppressed, will soon pay down the symbol of mortality, and moulder into dust. When Socrates was informed that the thirty tyrants had condemned him to die, he replied, — "Nature has condemned them to the same fate." What a lesson to the ambitious, to the warrior, the statesman, and the sovereign! The splendid palace will be exchanged

for a cemetery; the body which received the homage of the world, will be united with the common earth; vile worms will mangle what men deemed sacred. There is no distinction in the grave; all come from earth, and to earth they return. Jeremy Taylor says of the cemetery which contained the remains of Spanish kings, — “There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copy of the greatest change, from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to die like men.” A man in his lifetime must have quarries of stones formed into splendid palaces to cover him; at death, a few clods of earth are sufficient. Biocalus said to the Romans, — “We may be straitened for room on which to live, but we can always find room enough on which to die.” All the cares, anxieties, and forebodings — all the delights, tranquil feelings, and anticipations connected with this life — will then be destroyed. “Death,” says Dr. Barrow, “is a winter, that, as it withers the rose and lily, so it kills the nettle and thistle; as it stifles all worldly joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief.” — “There is neither work nor device,” said the Jewish monarch, “neither knowledge nor wisdom, in the grave, whither we are going.” This is the end of our labour, and, in some respect, the regulator of our destiny. How emphatic and interesting is that injunction of Solon — “Remember thine end!” The approach of death should occasion reflections on this important event; for it does not diminish, but rather increases, a feeling of calmness and security, when we know the worst — when we know the whole, and

prepare ourselves for it. When there is a studious avoidance of an event which must occur; and the mind only glances at it occasionally, while the imagination darkens it by throwing around it the shadows of gloom or the pale curtains of fear; there is a perpetual dread, an undefined awe: but this may be removed by looking calmly and steadily at the matter. We were born: we must die. We were brought into existence, not for any gain or advantage of the Deity; we shall die, not for any benefit to the Author of our being: our creation and our termination were designed for our good.

We were never intended, as some dark and gloomy persons may imagine, to be made the sport of Divine malevolence. The Almighty is the source of felicity and of goodness; and he who has formed the charming landscape, that we might admire it; who has spread out the mighty ocean, that we might wonder at it; who has decked the heavens with innumerable splendours, that we might behold the majesty of the Most High; would never have made man, and stamped upon him the never-fading marks of immortality, if he had meant for man to regret his existence. The Almighty is good; he intended our happiness: if we fail, it is not owing to fore-appointed councils, or seals of reprobation, but to our own inattention and folly. To those who, by "well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality," he will not present the cup—"one sip of which will bathe the drooping spirits in delight"—and then dash it untasted from their eager lips!

We hear sometimes of the dreadful condition of

men, as if, like Daniel, we were cast into a lion's den; as if the Supreme Being, like a foul tyrant, were watching the actions of human beings, and striving to enter into a quarrel with them, that he might satisfy his vengeance; as if men were never mistaken, never misled by ignorance, but always full of evil thoughts and motives; as if the devil were more powerful than the Almighty; as if God cared nothing for the world, nor his own glory, and therefore that man must entreat him to mind himself, as if he were never moved by pity or benevolence, unless he were excited to it by the suggestions of his creatures; as if he knew very little until he was told; as if there were nothing in the world but disorder, and that man, all-powerful man, was the only director of the moral machine; as if, although Christ died for all, yet none felt compassion for human beings but man. This is not the language of calm and considerate persons; but it is, too frequently, the language of bigots — of men who are bewildered by zeal, who kindle a fire and delight themselves with the blaze, but do not consider what mischief they may do. Men very frequently, instead of attending to the plain declarations of Scripture and their own duty, pretend to be wise above what is written; and thus they darken the condition of man, and slander the character of Jehovah. A clearer and brighter view of the condition of mankind, and a more worthy opinion of the Divine Being, is an animating excitement to virtue, an encourager of piety, and a contributor to human happiness. The opposite leads to gloom, inactivity, and despondency.

If we have correct opinions and consistent feelings, we shall not fear to live, nor fear to die. Death is only the key which unlocks the gates of paradise. "The first day of our jubilee is death," observes Sir Thomas Browne; "we are happier with death, than we should have been without it." To the humble and sincere, death is only a removal from a scene of fears and disappointments, pains and anxieties, to a blissful region of repose. Who, then, would cast a "longing, lingering look behind?" But people talk about the enjoyment of heaven, and then they heartily thank the Almighty for preserving them from it! On earth there is no fulness of happiness. Cowper says, —

"None here is happy but in part,
Full bliss is bliss divine;"

but there will be, in another world, a measure of enjoyment equal to our capacity; immortality will banish the dark shadows that sometimes settle on the brow of human life, and it will fix thereon a never-fading crown, which will shine more and more brilliantly with the light proceeding from the throne of the Eternal.

Even an early death is not to be greatly dreaded; it is only as the rose which is broken off in its beauty — as the blooming flowers which were offered to the gods in sacrifice: and certainly death before the weakness and imbecility of old age is desirable. "Many young persons," observes Bishop Taylor, "are loath to die, and therefore desire to live to old age; and when they are come thither, are troubled, that they are come to that

state of life, to which, before they were come, they were hugely afraid they should never come." As the end of life will certainly arrive, why are we so much disinclined to die? Why do we wish to make this earth our permanent abode? "Why dress we up in these our inns," enquires Dr Barrow, "as if they were our homes? and why are we careful about a few nights' lodging here, as if we designed an everlasting abode?" It is said by Cicero, that Cato the Censor declared he would not grow young again if he could. "Ex vitâ ita discedo," said Cato, "tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo; commorandi enim natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi dedit." (*De Senectute.*) — "I depart from this life, not as from a home, but as from an inn; for nature intended it for a visit, and not for a permanent abode." Our lives may be lengthened to half a century, or perhaps to a whole century, but the end is certain. We are anxious to prolong our residence when it draws towards a close; a year, or even a month, is deemed invaluable. "Those persons," observes Bishop Taylor, who three thousand years ago died unwillingly, and stopped death two days, or staid it a week, what is their gain? Where is that week?" The same excellent writer says, — "Be persuaded to believe that there is a condition of living better than this; that there are creatures more noble than we; that above there is a country better than ours; that the inhabitants know more and know better, and are in places of rest and desire. First, learn to value it, and then learn to purchase it; and death cannot be a formidable

thing, which lets us into so much joy and so much felicity." Hegesius sets forth the cares and troubles of life so eloquently, and the sublime Plato unrolled the chart of the heavenly land, and discoursed on the delights of Paradise with so much persuasion, that many destroyed themselves for the purpose of inheriting these enjoyments. Agesius, one of Plato's disciples, produced the same effect in the same way. Milton has beautifully shown, in the case of Lycidas, the transition from a watery grave to the shores of immortality : —

" So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves,
Where other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love."

Why should we hesitate to welcome death in the common course of nature, when many have been eager to rush into the territories of what is too commonly denominated the king of terrors? "For a Pagan," observes Sir Thomas Browne, "there may be some motives to be in love with life; but for a Christian to be amazed at death, I see not how he can escape this dilemma — that he is too sensible of this life, or hopeless of the life to come." Lord Bacon says, that "men fear death, as children fear the dark; and as the one is increased with tales, so is the other."

" The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave,
The deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm;
These are the bugbears of a winter's eve,
The terror of the living, not the dead."

YOUNG.

The dissolution of all material things will sooner or later arrive : first, the generations of men ; and then the globe itself, “ with all that it inherits, shall dissolve.”

“ Star after star from heaven’s high arch shall rush ;
Sun sink on suns, and systems systems crush ;
Headlong, extinct, to one dark centre fall,
And death, and night, and chaos, mingle all !”

DARWIN.

but the soul shall bloom in blissful immortality.

Life, then, is followed by dissolution ; future bliss is preceded by death. Happiness in another state of being is dependent on our conduct in this. All our enjoyments in the present life are dependent on wisdom, on virtue, on piety. What an inducement, then, to regulate our bodies, to improve our minds, to govern our passions, to go onward in the path of duty, —

“ Till death unfelt, this tender frame destroy,
In some soft dream or ecstasy of joy ;
Peaceful sleep out the sabbath of the tomb,
And wake to raptures in a world to come !”

POPE.

THE END.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.



